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MORE LAY THOUGHTS
OF A DEAN.

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MORE LAY THOUGHTS OF A DEAN

BY

WILLIAM RALPH INGE

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

*Author of "Outspoken Essays," "Lay Thoughts of a Dean,"
etc.*

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P R E F A C E

THE publishers of *Lay Thoughts of a Dean* have persuaded me to reprint some of my later contributions to the *Evening Standard*, from 1928 to the end of 1930. Whether these *causeries de mercredi* were worth rescuing from oblivion I must leave to the public to decide. That I enjoyed the fun of writing them will, I think, be apparent; and I hope it will be equally clear that behind most of them was a purpose as serious as that of many sermons in church. I cannot be too grateful to the generosity of the *Evening Standard*, which gave me a perfectly free hand, even when my opinions did not exactly correspond with the politics of the paper. It was a privilege to address, week by week, so vast an audience, most of whom could not be reached by a clergyman in any other way.

I have already begun to look back upon my invasion of the preserves of the professional journalist as a curious episode in my literary career. I do not think that half a day a week was too much to devote to these light homilies—*ridentem dicere verum quid vetat?*—but one cannot keep up this kind of writing for very long, and I am now engaged with another book on the philosophy of

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

religion, which permits of no relaxations. At seventy-one it is a race against time, if a man hopes to make a further contribution to thought. It is only too probable that if my projected book ever sees the light, it will show unequivocal signs of senility. But it is better to work while we have the day. *Vita sine literis mors est.*

W. R. INGE.

CONTENTS

RIGHT OR WRONG? SOME VEXED QUESTIONS

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| PREFACE | 5 |
| I. THE GOSPEL AND WEALTH | 11 |
| II. DISCIPLINE IN EVERYDAY LIFE | 17 |
| III. ARE THE MODERNIST CLERGY DISHONEST? | 24 |
| IV. THE RIGHT TO PUNISH | 31 |
| V. TO SPEND OR TO SAVE? | 38 |
| VI. SHOULD WE LIMIT OUR POPULATION? | 44 |
| VII. IS BETTING WRONG? | 50 |
| VIII. AMBITION | 56 |
| IX. ESAU OR JACOB? | 61 |

THE CONDUCT OF LIFE

| | |
|--|-----|
| I. VISIONS AND REVELATIONS | 69 |
| II. THOUGHTS ON READING | 76 |
| III. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MISER | 83 |
| IV. CHOOSING A CAREER | 89 |
| V. DAY-DREAMING | 95 |
| VI. SEVENTY YEARS OLD | 101 |
| VII. IS SILENCE GOLDEN? | 107 |
| VIII. SUMMER HOLIDAYS | 112 |

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

A TIME OUT OF JOINT

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. WOMEN IN POLITICS | 121 |
| II. ATAVISMS | 128 |
| III. INTERNATIONAL HATRED | 135 |
| IV. OUR CHARACTER ABROAD | 141 |
| V. "A PLAGUE O' BOTH YOUR HOUSES" | 147 |

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

| | |
|---|-----|
| I. FROM MY PRIVATE NOTEBOOK | 155 |
| II. PRANKS OF THE IMAGINATION | 161 |
| III. "IF——" | 167 |
| IV. CRICKET, PAST AND PRESENT | 173 |
| V. GHOSTS, PAST AND PRESENT | 179 |
| VI. PROTECTIVE MIMICRY | 185 |
| VII. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE | 190 |
| VIII. THE PUBLIC SCHOOL TRADITION | 195 |
| IX. SOME WISE SAWS | 200 |
| X. SOME DISRESPECTFUL CRITICISMS | 205 |
| XI. OUR COUNTRY CHURCHES | 211 |
| XII. "FIVE DEANS" | 217 |

THREE LECTURES

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| I. ENGLISH RELIGIOUS POETRY | 227 |
| II. SCIENTIFIC ETHICS | 257 |
| III. DEMOCRACY | 291 |

RIGHT OR WRONG?
SOME VEXED QUESTIONS

I

THE GOSPEL AND WEALTH

I PROPOSE to consider in turn certain moral problems on which public opinion in our generation is very much divided.

I shall, of course, discuss them with reference to Christian standards, but without assuming that traditional Christian teaching is necessarily right. They are big questions—far too big to be settled summarily. But there are many who have not time to study controversial literature. If I can set them some problems to think over, I shall be satisfied. I do not expect to make many converts to my own point of view.

“The social question,” says a German writer, “comes from the consciousness of a contradiction between economic development and the social ideal of liberty and equality which is being realized in political life.” The political theory is that everyone should count for one, and no one for more than one; but in the distribution of wealth there are enormous differences. Hence comes what we call social unrest.

Now, there are three possible attitudes about the relation of the Gospel to economics. We may hold that they have nothing to do with each other, since religion has to do with the soul and political

economy with the body. As an American put it very crudely, to mix religion and business is to spoil two good things. Or we may, like the Communists and most of the Continental Socialists, regard Christianity as the main obstacle to what they call social justice.

"The revolution," said Bebel, "denies religion altogether." "The first word of religion," said Engels, "is a lie." "The idea of God," said Marx, "must be destroyed; it is the keystone of a perverted civilization." "Religion," said Lenin, "is the opium of the people." This school desires no new religion in the place of the Gospel: it is purely materialistic and atheistic.

Or, thirdly, we may hold that the Gospel, if rightly understood, is revolutionary. The *Magnificat* is more violent than the *Red Flag*. Jesus was *le bon sans-culotte*, the ardent friend of the under-dog.

This last view is widely held in England, where Socialism is, on the whole, not anti-Christian. Church leaders like Bishop Gore have declared that after reading the Gospels the sight of our present social order makes them profoundly uneasy in their consciences.

Which is farthest from Christianity—the rich man who thinks, like Tennyson's Northern Farmer, that "the poor in a loomp is bad," and diligently adds house to house and field to field, or the materialistic Socialist, like Mr. Kirkwood, who says

“there is only one hateful evil in the world—poverty”?

The fact is that both have the same standard of values—possession is for them three parts of the law and the whole of the Gospel. One gets all he can, the other means to take everything away from him. The result is (and must be) class-war to the knife.

What was our Lord’s attitude? We must remember that the Hebrew people, especially when they were oppressed under foreign rule, had what has been called “a genius for hatred of the rich.” To pass through their literature, it has been said, is like passing through Dante’s *Inferno*. There is some of this hatred in the prophets, a trace of it in the Epistle of James, and we see it in full blast among the Russian dictators, half of whom are Jews, glad at last to “feed fat the grudge” they have borne so long against the ruling class.

But there is nothing of this in the Gospels. For one thing, Jesus was not a *sans-culotte* or “proletarian”: He belonged to an independent, well-educated, and fairly prosperous class of peasants. Poverty is not cruel in a hot country, and the Galileans were not very poor. What is more important, there was not a touch of envy or bitterness in His character. And He never thought about economic problems, still less ever attempted to legislate about them. His message was one of spiritual redemption, not of social reform. All the cumbrous paraphernalia of comfort and luxury

seemed to Him a useless burden, very hampering to the higher life. His followers were better without them. But the rich man is addressed as "thou fool," not as "thou thief."

He demonetizes the world's currency at a stroke; but when He is requested to "speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me," He answers sharply that these matters are no concern of His, and adds to His disciples, "Take heed and beware of all covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." Life is more than a livelihood—that is the sum of the social teaching of Christ.

The "Communism" of the early Church was merely voluntary generosity. There was no thought of founding a Socialist commonwealth, for to the first Christians the Church was a mere stop-gap till the Kingdom of God should come. Indeed, until modern times very few people thought that the world had any future.

This entire absence of long hopes for humanity is one of the two fundamental differences between traditional Christianity and our faith to-day. The other is that our view of history is evolutionary, the old view was catastrophic. There was very little "social teaching," apart from the duty of charity, in the Church, though there was much in the persecuted sects. The Anabaptists were real Christian Socialists, and were stamped out partly because they were politically dangerous.

The only Christian Communism was in the monasteries, which remain the one successful experiment of this kind in history. In order to succeed, Communism requires two conditions—a religious basis and a rule of celibacy. The rule of poverty, which was made so strict in the Order of St. Francis, was not based on any doubts about the right of holding property. It had two motives—the ascetic ideal and the wish to be independent of externals.

When the schoolmen began to debate about the rights of property, they taught that Communism may be the ideal state in Paradise, but that on earth there is a sort of relative law of Nature which sanctions private ownership. This is still the teaching of the Roman Church: a Catholic cannot be a Communist.

So far as I can see, those who wish to destroy our present industrial system and to substitute for it some form of collective ownership cannot appeal to the Gospel, which always works outwards from the individual to the society, never from society to the individual. From within, out of the heart of man, comes all that can exalt or degrade his nature.

At the same time, if the acquisitive instinct is so strong that the servants of Mammon make it difficult or impossible for those who take a more reasonable view of life to live happily and rationally, Christianity cannot be called in to protect the rights of property. It is possible to hold that in all societies dominated by Calvinism a sort of religion has been

made out of business, with the result that civilization is barbarized and despiritualized.

Christ would have said that the "successful men" are the chief sufferers. A millionaire complained that all he got from his wealth was the necessity of working eight hours a day to keep off the robbers. We can fancy Christ saying to him, "Poor silly fellow! Then why don't you let it go?"

I can see nothing unchristian in saving money in moderation, and I believe that from the social point of view that is the best use that we can make of a small surplus. It is plain, for example, that if I give five pounds to the unemployed I am preventing someone else from earning that five pounds. It is not easy to be charitable without doing as much harm as good. (I do not mean that this absolves us from the duty of giving: such advice would be very unchristian.)

It all comes back to this, that the Gospel has one standard of values, the world another, and that we must choose between them. The words "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" are obviously true, and they are a very stern warning to property owners. There are many of us whom Christ would certainly have advised to choose poverty for our souls' health—but not, so far as I can see, on the ground that the capitalist is necessarily a robber or a parasite. I do not think he need be either.

II

DISCIPLINE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

I AM writing for those—they are in a large majority—who do not think themselves morally bound to observe dietary rules at certain seasons of the year, but who are perhaps sometimes perplexed as to whether, as Christians, they ought to practise some form of fasting or self-denial.

To those who follow the Catholic custom of abstaining from butcher's meat in Lent I would only say this, if they would listen to me, which, of course, they will not do. I would say, Make your fasting a reality, not a sham. I have dined in Lent with Anglo-Catholics, who have given me a far more elaborate and appetizing dinner, though technically *maigre*, than I should think of ordering at home. This seems to me mere humbug, worthy only of the Pharisees in our Lord's time, with their tradition of the elders. My host and I would have fasted much more effectually on cold mutton.

Our little rules of diet are the attenuated survival of a tremendous system of self-punishment, which is not at all specifically Christian, but is found almost all over the world among peoples who are in a certain stage of civilization. Even the Buddhists, whose founder said wisely, "Not nakedness, not

plaited hair, not dirt, not fasting, not lying on the earth, not sitting motionless, can purify a man who has not overcome his desires," teach that "of the five crimes, the taking of life, theft, adultery, lying, and drinking wine, the last is the worst." (Too far West seems to be East; the Americans also seem to regard taking alcohol as a crime, homicide as a peccadillo.) Hindu ascetics remain in immovable attitudes till they stiffen into rigidity; they cut themselves with knives, or feed on carrion. Some fakirs lie on a spiked bed; others swing before a fire with the Indian sun blazing overhead.

Even modern Jews sometimes flagellate each other before the Day of Atonement. The Aztecs of Mexico tore their flesh till they stood in a pool of blood. We have all heard of St. Simeon Stylites and his pillar; and the life of the Blessed Henry Suso is full of the tortures which he inflicted on himself.

The motives for this ruthless maltreatment of the body are diverse. Sometimes the devotee wishes to punish himself for his sins, as a sign of repentance. He offers his bodily suffering as an expiation, sometimes even for the sins of others. Baron von Hügel tells a story which shows that this idea is not extinct in the Roman Catholic Church. A nun had tried in vain to persuade a girl who had become the mistress of a rich man to renounce her evil life. So she told her friend that until she promised to leave the man with whom she lived she would her-

self scourge her own body every day till the blood flowed. After a few days the girl did what was required of her. Baron von Hügel rightly praises this as a noble and heroic action on the part of the nun.

But besides this, there is the motive of subduing the flesh, especially temptations to lust; and another motive which with some has been predominant. It was discovered empirically that fasting and maceration of the body put the devotee in the most favourable state for receiving mystical visitations and supernatural favours. We have no right to assume that these visions of the invisible are always hallucinations: I do not think so myself.

At the present day the ordinary man of the world looks upon this strange chapter in the psychology of religion as mere barbarism and insanity. Why, they ask, should God be pleased at the unnecessary suffering of His creatures? Only the very worst men enjoy the sight of tortures. And are there not enough inevitable pains and troubles in the world without adding to them wilfully? Would not the ascetic be spending his time better in visiting the sick, clothing the naked, and comforting the sorrowful than in tormenting himself in his cell? "I cannot see the need of fasting," said Edward Thring, the famous head master of Uppingham. "To a man who tries to do his duty, life is a perpetual fast."

This sounds like common sense. And yet I cannot quite agree with those who talk so glibly about the

mistake of asceticism. After all, we have to deal with an almost universal tendency of human nature, in the New World as in the Old, in modern times as well as in antiquity. The extraordinary phenomenon of voluntary self-torture makes it all the more necessary to find some rational justification for it.

It is a fact that practically all the saints have accepted the principle of voluntary self-denial and that many of them have practised severe forms of it. It is significant that even William James, a very modern man, and not an orthodox believer, advises us all to do one or two things every day for no other reason except that we don't want to do them. It seems to me that all the excesses which I have mentioned bear the appearance of being perversions of something which is not itself perverse. They are irrational exaggerations of a real human need.

It all comes back to this. Is there anything in human nature which needs not be "sublimated" and directed into an innocent channel, but to be "repressed," starved, contradicted, and, if possible, killed?

The popular teaching just now is that there is not. Even our worst inclinations are only the result of "repression." We are to understand how they came to get hold of us; we are to bring them out into the open, judge them for what they are, and to find some outlet for them which the moral and

social sense will not condemn. The psycho-analysts are popular because they regard human nature as fundamentally innocent.

But it would not be too much to say that all the great authorities on the moral life are in disagreement with this view. Plato and the Eastern sages are as emphatic as the Christian moralists. They all agree that we have a lower self which must be, as St. Paul does not hesitate to say, crucified. Plato, who was not a severe ascetic, says: "Benefit comes only through pain and suffering; there is no other way of getting rid of our sins."

Matthew Arnold quite rightly, as it seems to me, insists that the maxim "Die to live" must be coupled with "the method of inwardness" as the two most fundamental and essential parts of the Christian revelation. He has no difficulty in justifying this from the New Testament; but he also quotes from that grand old pagan, Goethe, to the same effect: "Die and come to life. For until thou hast learned this lesson thou art only an unhappy stranger in a dark world."

I repeat that all the best and wisest men who have ever lived are on one side, and our popular modern guides on the other. If there is something in our nature which needs surgical, and not merely medical, treatment, asceticism is accepted in principle. Personally, I have no doubt whatever that our old teachers are right and the moderns wrong. We have a lower self, with whom we cannot afford

to deal gently. He is our worst enemy, and salvation means getting rid of him.

We are, in my opinion, quite free to choose the discipline which suits us best. It should be frequent, mild, irksome, and secret. I do not deny that hard work and kindnesses to others may in some cases make all further discipline unnecessary, and that some people have painful physical infirmities which need no voluntary aggravation. But generally I believe that some self-chosen abstinence is very desirable. The human heart gives itself dispensations more easily than the most indulgent father confessor; and it is worth while to be sure that there are some little things that we are willing to do or to go without, although there is no ulterior motive except our soul's health.

Perhaps the problem of asceticism is part of a still larger question. Are we to treat ourselves as purely rational beings and to "know the reason why" before we do anything which is contrary to our inclinations? Or does the wise man pay some respect to traditional taboos, on the ground that they would not have held their own so long if there were nothing to be said for them?

A tradition does not become more respectable by being ancient; but it is easy to underrate the intelligence of those who live partly by custom. We cannot find any consistent rule for such cases; but wherever moral conduct is concerned it is safer to be respectful to tradition. And I feel sure that

DISCIPLINE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

in one way or another we ought to live in fairly strict training. This is, after all, what asceticism means—training, as men train for a race. There is a moral and even intellectual flabbiness about those who will not go into training.

III

ARE THE MODERNIST CLERGY DISHONEST?

THERE is no class from whom the Liberal theologian may count on receiving harder measure than from the anti-clerical laity. We can hear one of these men saying, "For my part, I cannot see how any honest and intelligent man can become a parson. I suppose they do it because they cannot get their living in any other way." Mr. J. B. S. Haldane, the biochemist, says that the clergy are the dregs of the universities. But any way, say the anti-clericals, when a man is ordained he has to speak to a brief, and whether he believes what he is saying or not, he must either earn his fees or throw up his job.

That is quite a common view of the clergy. Those who hold it will naturally neither talk candidly to a clergyman nor pay any respect to what he says.

The same view of the clergyman's duty, though without disrespect, is held by multitudes of simple believers, who dread above all things being disturbed in the religious opinions which they formed long ago. What they were taught as children does very well for them. The only real difficulties about religion for them are practical, not intellectual.

ARE THE CLERGY DISHONEST?

On one of the very few occasions on which I have been privileged to listen to words of wisdom from a crowned head, the monarch (he was not our own King) complained to me that learned men will not leave things alone. "If they must hold these disturbing views," he said, "why don't they publish them in scientific periodicals, which nobody reads?"

It is a wonder that the poor Modernist, exposed to such a cross-fire as this, does not take refuge in silence. "Since word is thrall, and thought is free, guard well thy tongue, I counsel thee." A man who can hold his tongue can hold anything, even a bishopric.

The Modernist is not generally a combative person; he may not always be a very clear-headed person; but he has one quality—the one which his opponents deny him—he is a very honest person. Why in the world should a man preach ideas which he knows to be unpopular and injurious to his prospects, except because he believes them to be true? He does not accept the cheap-jack view of the clerical office. He believes that he has pledged himself to be a servant of the Spirit of Truth.

Let us place ourselves at his point of view, and see how the history of the Christian Church looks from this angle. The Son of God came to earth to reveal to man what the character of God is, what the true standard of values is, and how we ought

to live, whether alone or in society. This is the solid gold, which has been enclosed in several perishable vessels.

To begin with, the Gospel looked like a reform movement within Judaism. The disciples differed from other Jews only in thinking that they knew who the coming Messiah was to be—namely, their own Master. Then St. Paul did a most revolutionary thing. He carried the Gospel over into the Graeco-Roman world, and remodelled it with some superficial resemblance to the mystery-religions of the time. In so doing he won Europe and lost Asia.

As time went on, and educated people entered the Church, all the best honey of pagan philosophy was brought into the Christian hive. Christian ethics became mainly Stoical, Christian philosophy mainly Platonic. In the time of Augustine the best brains and the best knowledge of the time were Christian. There was no pagan who could boast himself the intellectual equal of the Bishop of Hippo.

After the Dark Ages the West began to study Aristotle, to whom it was introduced by Arabian scholars. Another great adjustment had to be made; a mass of secular thought had to be assimilated. This was the work of the schoolmen, among whom the greatest was Thomas Aquinas. Once again the Church was well abreast of the best learning of the time. In the thirteenth century, as in the fourth, the Church had succeeded in "adding to its faith, knowledge."

ARE THE CLERGY DISHONEST?

Then came the Renaissance, when Western Europe was intoxicated with the inspiration which came from the art and literature and science of antiquity, so long forgotten and now partially recovered. Could the Church make this new and glorious treasure its own? The humanists said Yes. The splendid schools of Italian painters worked in the service of the Church. Erasmus and his friends, like our own John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, hoped to enrich theology with the new scholarship. There was, of course, fierce opposition, to which Erasmus answered in an immortal sentence, "By identifying the new learning with heresy you are making orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance."

The work of these far-seeing reformers was brought to nought by the savage wars of religion, which not only devastated Europe but plunged religion back into barbarism. Catholicism and Protestantism alike were narrowed, hardened, and brutalized. Humanists and philosophers were not wanted, unless they could supply weapons against the other side. The ideals of Erasmus and Colet had to be hung up indefinitely. And this was the time when the Church ought to have been adjusting itself to the new discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo.

The Renaissance, which began with art and literature, won its later triumphs in natural science. But the Church made no response. So came about a state of affairs with which we are so familiar

that we think it normal—"the conflict between religion and science." It is not normal, and it is not incurable. It is the result of a historical accident—the disruption of Christendom and the long struggles which that disruption brought with it, just at the time when a mass of new knowledge was setting to the Church a great but by no means insoluble problem.

The chasm once opened could only grow wider. The necessary adjustments looked more and more formidable, and there were ominous signs that the Christian world might come to be divided into two classes—those who had no wish to reconcile religious tradition with modern knowledge because they had broken loose from religion altogether, and the timid orthodox, the fundamentalists as the Americans call them, who are afraid to take one step for fear that they may be called upon to go farther.

The longer the necessary readjustment is put off the more difficult it becomes to take it in hand.

This is the situation with which we are confronted to-day. The development of religion has been arrested; the development of science has not been arrested. The Church has a long leeway to make up. The readjustment of its doctrines which it must make if it is to be intellectually tenable by educated men is less serious than the task which St. Paul carried through successfully, but more serious than any of the later intellectual crises in

ARE THE CLERGY DISHONEST?

Church history—more serious than the agreement with Platonism and Stoicism in the fourth century, with Aristotle in the thirteenth, or the Reformation controversies in the sixteenth. It has become very serious because it has been too long neglected. But it does not touch the solid foundations of the Christian revelation.

This is the Modernist case. The Liberal theologian is no dogmatist. He knows that both in science and scholarship new discoveries may invalidate theories now held. There is no finality in human knowledge. The "last word" may be left to the last man, who would seem to be the right person to speak it. But he does not see why the Christian should be condemned to live in a pre-Copernican and pre-Darwinian universe.

It was no part of the sacrifice which Christ demands from us that we should have to outrage our intellectual conscience. It is hard enough to be a good Christian without having these unnecessary burdens laid upon our shoulders. Mistakes will be made and acknowledged. But we shall not avoid mistakes by remaining stubbornly motionless in a moving world.

It is, of course, impossible to impose a uniform standardized orthodoxy on the professor and his kitchenmaid. Wide differences of education demand a wide latitude in beliefs. But it is not possible to have two creeds, one for the learned and the other for common people. There is no longer any barrier

between the educated and the uneducated. The modern world belongs to the half-educated, a rather difficult class, because they do not realize how little they know. The necessity for revising some of our beliefs cannot be kept from them; they know how matters stand, and they have a right to know.

In my opinion, the charge against Liberal theologians cannot be sustained. There are some, of course, who have mistaken their vocation; but if to-day there is room in the Church for people who are neither fools, bigots, nor liars, the credit belongs to the small body of men who have faced obloquy in trying to perform a very urgent duty.

IV

THE RIGHT TO PUNISH

THE essence of punishment is retaliation. It is the expression of the righteous indignation of society, and its object is to cause the offender as much pain as we think he deserves. This is the plain truth of the matter—"the old, old law that the transgressor shall suffer," as Aeschylus says.

We do not always recognize this, because many offences which the law punishes do not arouse universal indignation. The Conservative has a tender place in his heart for generals who shoot down insurgents, and for tax-dodgers; the Socialist has a weakness for burglars and pickpockets, who are humble practitioners in his own line of business. The Liberal is very merciful to "political" offenders; to execute a "political" murderer is "coercion," and the Liberal has his own remedy for rebellion—kid gloves and rose-water. But when a crime is committed which makes us all really indignant, such as cruelty to a child or even an animal, we don't think of reforming the offender: we merely want to punish, that is to say, to hurt him.

The question has been inevitably raised whether retributive punishment is not contrary to the precept of the Gospel that we should forgive our brethren even unto seventy times seven, basing

our prayers for forgiveness on the fact that we forgive those who trespass against us.

St. Thomas Aquinas is ready with his answer. "The good bear with the wicked to this extent, that so far as it is proper to do so they patiently endure the injuries offered to themselves; but not to the extent of enduring the injuries done to God and their neighbours." "It is the height of impiety," says St. Chrysostom, "to forgive injuries done to God."

Objections to the retributive theory of punishment are very old, but they have not come mainly from Christians. Plato thinks that punishment is only justifiable as a corrective or a deterrent. Seneca takes the same line. Hobbes says that "the aim of punishment is not revenge but terror." The majority of modern writers take the same view, and anyone who maintains that punishment is essentially vindictive, and that it is unjust to punish a man for any other reason than that he deserves to be hurt, must expect to be howled at.

Very well. Let us take the view that punishment is only reformatory and deterrent, and see how this principle works out. A man is convicted of murdering his father and his mother. The enlightened judge thus addresses him:

"Prisoner at the bar, you have been found guilty of a crime which in the days of our barbarous ancestry would have been thought worthy of exceptionally severe punishment. In ancient Rome

you would have been tied up in a sack with a snake, a monkey, and a cock, and drowned in the Tiber. Still more cruel penalties might be quoted from other codes. We, however, have abandoned the vindictive theory of punishment. The crime which you have committed is proved by statistics to be the rarest of all offences. For one reason or another, there seems to be practically no temptation for children to murder their parents. It is, therefore, not worth while to make an example of you in order to deter others from conduct to which they show no propensity. There remains the other just object of punishment, as a deterrent. But as you are now an orphan it is impossible for you to repeat the offence for which you are now convicted. The judgment of the court is that you are bound over to keep the peace for six months."

On the same principle, it would be unjust to punish an incorrigible criminal, since punishment can do him no good.

It seems to me that the public mind is in a state of tangled confusion on the whole subject, and I wish, if not to smooth out these tangles, at any rate to make my own position clear.

To take first the disputed question of the right to execute a criminal. I do not know the origin of the widespread notion that capital punishment is justified in cases of murder, but of murder only. If the origin is a verse in Genesis, it is absurd; for the Mosaic Law inflicted the capital penalty

for several other offences, such as adultery and Sabbath-breaking. If it is a survival of the crudest *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, it is barbarous.

The truth surely is that society has a right to exact the extreme penalty for any detestable crime, but that public opinion would seldom demand such a sentence. But besides this, the State has as good a right to remove undesirable citizens as a gardener has to weed his garden. This, however, is not punishment, but a measure of social hygiene. Incurable offenders, whether they are homicides or burglars or engaged in any other anti-social activity which makes them a public nuisance, ought to be put out of the way, but not as a punishment. No humiliation ought to be put upon them; the degrading punishment of hanging ought never to be employed.

Political crimes ought to be more, not less, severely punished than private. Those who make plots against society must expect to be treated as public enemies; good intentions are no excuse whatever.

Although moral indignation is the real justification for inflicting punishment, great care must be taken that the indignation is enlightened. We do not wish to see alleged witches tortured or heretics burned. We do not wish the persons directly injured to be allowed to assess the penalty, nor to hand over victims to a sudden explosion of popular

rage. In fact, even those who claim that punishment is retributory would generally wish to apply it comparatively seldom.

Another difficulty is to decide how far repentance should be allowed to extenuate guilt. It makes almost the whole difference to popular indignation whether the culprit is sorry for his offence or not. And this suggests that we do not exactly want to hurt the offender, but only the offender as representing the offence. When he separates himself in will from his crime it is no longer wholly his. But practically it is impossible to carry out the principle that we ought to punish the sin and not the sinner.

Punishment as a deterrent is immoral, but perhaps necessary. But here, again, we must distinguish between punishment and the protection of society. We do not punish a lunatic by putting him in a madhouse; perhaps the incarceration of a thief is not exactly punishment either. But if not, he ought to be locked up, like the lunatic, till he has ceased to be dangerous. If we justify "terror" as a motive for punishment, why not punish the children of the malefactor—a very effective way of deterring him and others? But this nobody would recommend.

We all know how the confusion of the public mind about punishment is reflected in theology. "Vicarious punishment," a grossly immoral thing, has been supposed to have been sanctioned and accepted by the Deity as the means of man's

redemption. So extreme has been the confusion that no distinction has been drawn between vicarious punishment and vicarious suffering.

Reformatory treatment is not punishment at all, but a method of therapeutics which happens sometimes to be painful. The old-fashioned schoolmaster could never quite make up his mind whether frequent floggings were intellectually stimulating to the boy or whether the old Adam had to be driven out of him by punishment in the proper sense of the word. Both were held to be good reasons for using the rod. Now, on the contrary, the State schoolmaster hardly dares to touch a boy, and even in the public schools retribution seldom takes this form.

No writer has done more to expose the absurdities of our views of punishment than Samuel Butler, the author of *Erewhon*, who imagines a country in which disease is treated as crime, and crime as disease. Nobody dares to confess that he is ill, as he would be promptly sent to prison; but if he is conscious of a tendency to misappropriate other people's money, he puts himself under a "straightener," who perhaps orders him a monthly flogging, after which his friends call to ask how he is.

Until we are clear in our own minds what we wish to do with our criminals—to get rid of them altogether, as we have a perfect right to do, or to make them suffer as they deserve, or to lock them up while they are dangerous, or to deter others

THE RIGHT TO PUNISH

from doing the same thing, or to cure them of their evil ways—our penal practice will remain the mass of inconsistencies which it is now. And it would clear the air if we used the word punishment only in its proper sense, as the infliction of retributive justice by the community.

V

TO SPEND OR TO SAVE?

I BELONG to a generation when it was supposed to be the duty of a good citizen to live on two-thirds of his income and to invest the remaining one-third in sound securities for the benefit of his family. We did not always do it, for the flesh is weak; but we thought it the right thing to do. Now it seems not to be done. The other day I asked one of our leading bankers whether there had been much change in this respect since the war. His answer was, "Nobody is saving now."

The causes are not far to seek. Rates and taxes shear off the one-third which people used to save. And, what is even more important, there is no longer any security that a man will be allowed to reap what he has sown. The fantastic doctrine that invested savings are the cause of poverty is preached up and down the country, not only by Socialist politicians, but by the court-chaplains of King Mob—the Coles and Tawneys and scores of parsons.

The State already draws a distinction between earned and unearned income, and regards the latter as fair game for predatory raids. Personally, I am ready to maintain that every shilling of my savings, such as they are, has been honestly,

thoroughly, and laboriously earned, and I deny the right of the State to rob me of it for the benefit of persons who are not earning anything. But as long as we have universal suffrage each General Election will be a kind of auction of the worldly goods of the minority.

But the question whether we ought to square our accounts with life by increasing our numerator or by diminishing our denominator goes deeper than the question as to the duty of saving and the injustice of penalizing thrift. There are two opposite ideals of how to live wisely. According to one theory, civilization consists in multiplying wants and the means of gratifying them. According to the other, the more things that we can contentedly go without the better off we shall be.

Of course, both theories may be pushed so far as to be obviously absurd. We do not commend either Diogenes in his tub or the North-country mine-owner who said to Creevey, "One can just jog along on £40,000 a year." But when the two theories of personal economics are carried out within reasonable limits, there is room for difference of opinion; and so this question may be included in my series of moral problems.

There are some Socialists who pretend to believe that unemployment is caused by "under-consumption," and that if we gave the working man more to spend he would be able to keep himself and his mates in comfort and regular work. This is, of

course, the fallacy of the schoolboy who said that the inhabitants of the Hebrides live by taking in each other's washing. The truth is disguised in America, where the prodigious wealth of the country really comes from exploiting the enormous unearned increment of an era of rapid expansion.

A good deal of American wealth comes from the reckless destruction of the natural resources of the land, such as coal, oil, and timber. The prosperity is real, but it cannot go on at its present rate for ever. And are the victims of the art of salesmanship really any happier? Home life in America tends more and more to break up, and the business class is sterile.

But there is in North America another race, of whom there is a different story to tell. What is the largest French city in the world, after Paris? Is it Marseilles, or Lyons? No, it is Montreal. The French Canadians were few in number when Wolfe took Quebec, and there has not been much immigration since. But they have multiplied like rabbits, until they threaten to squeeze the English-speaking population out of Eastern Canada; and they are swarming over into the State of Maine.

It is usual to attribute this enormous increase to their religion; the Roman Catholic Church, as is well known, discourages family limitation. But this is not the true explanation. However influential the priests may be, they cannot compel their flocks to have large families, unless there is work for them

to do. The birth-rate in France and Belgium is low, in spite of the Church.

I was talking to a Canadian business man the other day, and he told me that the French are content with a very low standard of living and small returns on a hard day's work. They will rough it on the land, while the English Canadians go into business in the towns, living much more expensively, but not really creating wealth, and limiting their families.

The same is true, perhaps even more so, in the United States. It is one more example of the truth that nothing *fails* like success. A ruling class rules itself out, and ultimately disappears; the low-standard peoples are likely to win in the long run.

Canada is prosperous; in England the case is much more serious. For a hundred years we have been in a privileged position; for half that time we had almost a monopoly in some great industries. In consequence, the Englishman has a deep-rooted conviction that for some unexplained reason he has a right to larger wages, shorter hours, and a higher standard of living than the foreigner on the Continent. But in reality this privileged position is gone for ever. We are no longer secure against sudden attack, and in consequence we have to pay a large part of our national income in burglary insurance.

This alone gives the invulnerable nations, such as the Americans, a decisive advantage over us.

There are not many things, among those which we produce, which cannot be turned out better or more cheaply abroad. And yet we must sell our exports or starve. Our neighbours the French, who are models of enlightened selfishness, have gauged the situation correctly. They are still self-denying, industrious, and thrifty, as they always have been, and so they have no unemployment.

In my opinion, nothing can save this country except ten years of drastic economy, public and private, and hard work. There is not the slightest hope, so far as I can see, from any of the three political parties. We are all idling, gambling, and spending—rushing towards the precipice like the Gadarene swine.

What has Christianity to say in the matter? The Gospels discourage hoarding, and warn us that where our treasure is there will our heart be also. It is doubtless true that to make money, even by honest work and thrift, may be a snare. The Calvinists, with their doctrine that self-denying industry is the typically godly life, created the modern business man; but too often those who have become rich by living like Puritans have forgotten the simplicity, strict honesty, and generosity which were part of the whole duty of man according to Calvin. And so the ethics of Puritanism have come to be discredited.

But I believe we ought to return to them. I believe that plain living is a Christian duty, as

well as a patriotic duty. The French understand the art of living much better than we do, and they avoid waste almost instinctively. To buy things which do us no good and give us no pleasure is stupid, but most English people do it constantly. And the old fallacy that free spending is good for trade, though John Stuart Mill exposed it long ago, is by no means dead. Political economy is not held in much respect now.

Well, this kind of advice always has been and always will be given by the old and disregarded by the young. The happy-go-lucky cheerfulness of the younger generation, who, as far as we can see, are likely to have a rough time, is extraordinary. I am inclined to think that though they take all the amusements and luxuries that they can get, they really care less about comforts than their parents did, and they are certainly less anxious. It is quite possible that if the lean years come they will adapt themselves good-humouredly. Many of them have had to do so already. So we elders must leave them to take their own line—as they will, whether we let them or not.

VI

SHOULD WE LIMIT OUR POPULATION?

THE relations of the sexes are the chief preserve of taboo-morality. The taboo is something which simply must not be done, without asking for any reasons. Such rules have had a most important protective influence in primitive societies, and their work is by no means over even in civilized peoples. Periods of rationalism, when all taboos are discredited or called in question, are necessary in order to clear away rubbish, but they are always dangerous to the stability of civilization.

One of these taboos has broken up very rapidly since the beginning of this century. Ever since the time of Malthus it has been recognized that population always tends to increase more rapidly than the means of subsistence, though for a time, while wealth and population in England were growing together "by leaps and bounds," there were some who thought that the spectre had been laid.

Only fifty years ago an essay recommending what is now called birth-control was officially stigmatized as "an obscene libel." Now, the indignation which the mere suggestion of such a thing formerly aroused has so far subsided that birth-control clinics are openly supported by leading men in all

SHOULD WE LIMIT POPULATION?

the professions except the clerical, and the subscription lists are adorned by the names of a galaxy of titled ladies.

The politicians hang back, not because they are not convinced that the country is over-populated, but because they are afraid of losing the Roman Catholic vote.

If we put aside the taboo (and I have already admitted that to disregard taboos is risky) the case for restriction is perfectly clear. The era of the Anglo-Saxon expansion seems to be over. We cannot find employment for our present population, and there is no prospect of bringing unemployment to an end, except by obviously uneconomic expedients which must make matters worse.

A combination of semi-socialism in distribution with *laissez-faire* in procreation is manifestly absurd. If the State undertakes that nobody in England shall starve, the natural check upon increase is removed, and it becomes the duty of the State to ascertain the optimum population, and to take whatever steps may be necessary to prevent this number from being exceeded. It is possible that the necessary restriction may be brought about voluntarily, without such State-action as penalizing the fathers of large families.

This has, in fact, happened in our own country. What we are suffering from is the high birth-rate of a generation ago, not the birth-rate of to-day, which on the basis of a stationary population hardly

equals the death-rate. The misfortune is that though the birth-rate (16·6 in 1927, and 16·7 in 1928, a leap year) is low, one of the lowest in Europe, the births are not evenly distributed among the population.

Too many children are born in the slums, too few in the professional class and in some branches of skilled labour. There is nothing snobbish in admitting the obvious fact that the children of those who have made good are likely, on the average, to be more useful citizens than the children of wastrels and misfits. This dysgenic birth-rate, encouraged of course by taxation, gives serious concern to all students of eugenics.

The case for a rational limitation of births, apart from taboo-morality, is overwhelmingly strong. But I have no wish to brush aside the prejudices of religious people, some of whom seem unable to draw any moral distinction between the prevention of conception by married couples and other practices, which all decent people condemn.

There are, however, reasons for thinking that this particular taboo is no longer supported by the conscience of good people generally. It survives mainly in the Roman Catholic Church, in which some of the considerations which among Protestants and free-thinkers count for a great deal in questions of right and wrong are not operative.

In order to illustrate this I will give two quotations. The first is from Burke, and is probably

SHOULD WE LIMIT POPULATION?

familiar to many of my readers. But as it is about the noblest expression of political faith that I know, those who have read it will not mind reading it again.

“The State is a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living and those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular State is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world; according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral nature, each in their appointed place.”

Burke may have got part of this from Plato; but is it not the religion of the future, which takes the whole of human welfare in its province, consecrating enlightened patriotism as the expression of eternal and spiritual law?

Now listen to Cardinal Newman:

“The Church holds that it were better for sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the

earth to fail, and for all the many millions who are upon it to die of starvation in extremest agony, than that one soul should commit one venial sin, should tell one wilful untruth, though it harmed no one, or steal one poor farthing without excuse."

After reading this we realize the gulf between the morality of the present and that of the past. If we agree with Newman, we ought to abolish bank holidays, if it can be demonstrated that one single man got drunk last Easter Monday who would have remained sober if he had been kept at work.

The command "Be fruitful and multiply"—promulgated, according to our authorities, when the population of the world consisted of two persons—must be obeyed now that it contains 1,800 millions, even if the result is that from time to time "millions die of starvation, in extremest agony." These appalling consequences, it seems, do not affect the sinfulness of an action at all.

However much we may admire the magnificent immobility of this great Church, however grateful we may be for its unflinching protestation that we ought "because right is right, to follow right, in the scorn of consequence," we cannot follow it in opinions which outrage not only common sense but the dictates of an enlightened conscience.

But this is not the whole story. Why is it that an able-bodied Englishman, educated and steady,

SHOULD WE LIMIT POPULATION?

seems to be a drug in the market? Granted that our island is over-full, is there no room for him in our vast Empire? Quite lately, a thoroughly competent German made a complete tour of Australia in order to ascertain how many people that continent could carry. He divided Australia into about thirty sections, and marked each with the number of inhabitants per square mile, from five to one hundred and thirty, which he thought the land could support.

The astonishing result was that in his opinion Australia and Tasmania could support from 150 to 200 million inhabitants. At present there are about six millions, half of them huddled together in a few coast towns.

By leaving these magnificent Colonies empty we are losing an opportunity which will probably never come again, and certainly not to us, in the whole history of humanity. What is the matter with us? Are the pampered products of our public schools and universities too apt to turn out "rotters"? Has the citizenship of the working man been so debauched by politicians that he thinks he has an inherent right to put in fourpence and take out ninepence—and no country on earth wants that kind of man?

There is plainly something gravely wrong, something that threatens the whole future of our race and nation. Is it possible that the epitaph on our great industrial civilization will be: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end of it are the ways of death"?

VII

IS BETTING WRONG?

THREE classes of men are understood to have conscientious objections to the Betting Tax—bookmakers, bishops, and Labour politicians. The first, I believe, claim that they are only the poor man's stockbrokers. The second declare that bookmakers are such wicked people that neither the Church nor the State ought to recognize that they exist. The third are very indignant that the vices of the working man should be taxed while the middle class still has any taxable virtues.

For the purposes of this article we need not distinguish between betting and gambling; they are essentially the same. Originally, like most of the things we do, they were connected with religion—a kind of divination. Casting lots was sometimes a very solemn matter. But games of chance are as old as civilization and older. The Egyptians used knuckle-bones, the Minoans of Crete gaming-tables, 3,500 years ago.

Gambling implements have even been found, I regret to say, in the tombs of the early Christians, but Councils of the Church forbade the clergy to play for money. The ancient Germans, according to Tacitus, were so mad over the dice-box that they would gamble away even their personal freedom.

IS BETTING WRONG?

In the reign of Henry VIII certain new and crafty games, including dice, cards, and bowls, were forbidden to the working class, apparently because they interfered with the practice of archery. Lotteries were made illegal at the end of the seventeenth century. There has been, as we all know, much recent legislation against betting, the main object being to protect the young.

But the practice continues to grow, and it has been estimated that over a hundred and fifty million pounds a year (some say five hundred million) changes hands in this way.

Disraeli quite rightly called betting and gambling "a vast engine of national demoralization." A prison chaplain gave it as his experience that gamblers are the most irreclaimable of all criminals. It has taken the place of alcoholic excess as the chief national vice, and those who are the best qualified to judge take the gravest view of its results on the character of the people.

The practice, however, is sometimes defended. It is said that it adds pleasure and excitement to a game, and that if the players are willing to pay a little for the extra pleasure, no harm is done. It is also said that life insurance, which is generally approved of, is essentially a gambling transaction. I bet the insurance company that I shall die before a certain date. Or if I invest my money in the hope that the stock will go up, or that it will pay

more than the normal rate of interest, is not that gambling?

The comparison with life insurance is not fair. The object of insurance is not to increase risk, but to counteract the inevitable uncertainty of life by spreading the risk over a large number of persons. As for operations on the Stock Exchange, some of them are a species of gambling, and are usually called by that name; but a high rate of interest is properly regarded as partly insurance. So many undertakings fail that no one would risk his money in industrial enterprises unless he could expect more than the normal rate of interest if the enterprise succeeds. Socialists, when they inveigh against the profits of capitalists, find it convenient to forget this obvious truth.

But though nobody who knows the facts can deny that betting and gambling are a gigantic evil, it is not very easy to say in what the sinfulness consists. It is essentially a wish to obtain money without earning it; but I am afraid most of us are not vehemently averse from doing this. It is an appeal to chance; but many people feel that a world without the opportunity of an occasional lucky dip would be too dull to live in.

At least, I suppose these are the motives; for personally I have never felt the smallest temptation to risk even a sixpence in this way. I have once or twice been obliged to play cards for money, "to make up a four"; but for me it entirely

destroyed the pleasure of the game. So perhaps I am not the right person to discuss this temptation sympathetically.

Apart from the temptations to extravagance, dishonesty, and waste of time which betting and gambling bring with them, their worst feature seems to me to be the mental condition of which they are symptomatic. An utter lack of intelligent interest, a dreary boredom and discontent, an entire want of conscience about the getting and spending of money—these are the only states of mind that could drive anyone to the gaming-table or the sporting columns. To the man who has found his vocation this gadfly of boredom and monotony is unknown.

The wise moralist does not believe in frontal attacks. Medical practice in the past was far too much bent upon attacking the symptoms of a disease instead of its causes. If the stomach refused to function, it was loaded with more food; the consumptive was choked with a respirator; and so on. It is only another form of the same treatment to try to cure intemperance by prohibition and gambling by special legislation.

Both intemperance and gambling are symptoms that our manner of living is unhealthy. Dullness and monotony may be the chief causes. There is in human nature a possibly unregenerate desire to escape from the world of law and order and regular work and regular wages into a different world,

where the blind goddess Chance, non-moral, but not malevolent, dispenses loss and gain without any consideration of merit or demerit.

We are not made for a farmyard Utopia, as William James realized after spending a week among the highbrows at Chataqua. He drew a sigh of relief when he got back to the very imperfect conditions of normal American life, and, as he put it, saw the dear old devil not too far off.

But there are better remedies for boredom than gambling. It is here, I think, that we may hope great things from education and rational amusements. The world is full of interesting things, many of which are now within the reach of all.

I do not think that the French, who cultivate the art of living much more successfully than we do, bet and gamble nearly so much as the English. The Americans certainly do not, though I should not say that as a nation they are more civilized than we are. I do not altogether admire the American type of civilization, which is characterized by the maximum of productivity combined with extreme prodigality in consumption. A vulgar type, we may think; but, at any rate, it seems to keep many people from this particular temptation.

To those who accept the Christian view of property, that it is a trust committed to us by God, gambling is clearly inadmissible. But in dealing with men in the mass I believe the best remedy is that which has made drunkenness a comparatively

rare sight in our streets—wider interests, better education, a more serious but not a less cheerful view of life generally. We have to learn, what we have hardly realized yet, that the problem of leisure is becoming as important as the problems of work and distribution.

The soul is dyed the colour of its leisure thoughts. A man's rank in the scale of being is determined by the things he loves and is interested in. What we care about, that we are.

There could hardly be a more dismal confession of moral and intellectual failure than to admit that our leisure hours hang so heavy on our hands that we must needs escape from our own empty-headedness by betting on a football match or a horse race.

VIII

AMBITION

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days.

I HAVE been reading Lord Ronaldshay's interesting *Life of Lord Curzon*. I knew Lord Curzon only very slightly, at Eton and since, and it may be that his intimate friends resent the popular impression of his character, which no doubt was a complex one—most characters are complex.

But Lord Ronaldshay's book on the whole confirms what I thought about him before—that he was a perfect example of the "great-souled man" in Aristotle's *Ethics*, the man who "thinks himself worthy of great things, being really worthy of them." In other words, he was an honourably but intensely ambitious man. It seems from this book that the close of his life was embittered by not becoming Prime Minister.

If this is so, and he seems to have made no secret of his disappointment, we have, I think, an explanation of the fact that he was never understood except by his nearest friends. For this kind of ambition is not typical of the English aristocrat to whose class he belonged. I do not suppose that

either of the Victorian Lord Derbys, or the great Lord Salisbury, or the late Duke of Devonshire, better known as Lord Hartington, or Arthur Balfour, cared very much whether they were Prime Ministers or not.

The real aristocrat is too disdainful of public opinion to care much. One can fancy Hartington, on being applauded in the House of Commons, whispering to his neighbour (as a Greek orator did) with a yawn, "Have I said anything unusually foolish?" Schopenhauer gives us the aristocratic attitude towards popularity: "Would any musician care much for the applause of his audience if he knew that half of them were stone deaf, and that the other half had been bribed to clap the worst performer?"

Lord Rosebery, I believe, told his friends quite early in life that he intended to do three things—to win the Derby, to marry the richest heiress in England, and to be Prime Minister. I think I heard this story before he did any of them, but my memory may be at fault. Anyhow, this was not the devouring kind of ambition, but only a kind of game. He would not have been very unhappy if in all three competitions he had remained in the class of "also ran," like one of our little allies in the Great War.

A consuming desire for recognition is always a weakness. It distinguishes vanity from pride, which does not care what other people think. "They say—

What say they?—Let them say,” is the proud motto of a college in Scotland. Benjamin Franklin thought that “it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life.” But I am not sure that he was right. The vain man is seldom disliked, but he is always laughed at, and he is sometimes sensitive.

The proud aristocrat is apt to be indolent, which Lord Curzon never was. Ambition is like the bunch of carrots which costermongers hang in front of their donkeys’ noses: it makes them go. William James estimates that nine-tenths of the work in the world is done by ambition. The man who regards his work as his play—and this is the way to succeed in life and to be happy—nearly always plays to win. There is no reason why he should not play fairly and good-humouredly. The struggle is really the prize, as it is in every game that is worth playing.

One of the dangers of our civilization, it seems to me, is that we have a large unambitious class, who only work for their wages, and have no thought beyond amusement. I do not say it is their fault: the prizes may be obviously out of their reach. But if Socialism kills ambition, as it threatens to do, we shall soon be on the down-grade. As the Emperor Tiberius said when he was asked to increase doles and pensions, “Industry will languish, laziness will increase, if no one has anything to hope or fear from himself. All will look for help from outside, idle themselves, and a burden to us.”

AMBITION

Is the average successful man ambitious? Some great men are mysterious. Until we know why Shakespeare knocked off writing plays at forty-seven, when he was at the height of his genius, we shall never be able to say whether he was ambitious of immortal fame, or whether, as some have been found to aver, he was just a man of business who happened to be able to write better than anyone else.

When Napoleon was a moody and penniless young lieutenant of artillery, we cannot tell whether he ever dreamed of his future career. But when he found the ball at his feet he determined to play the game for all it was worth. He knew well that it was a unique chance. "I could not replace myself," he said.

Some men, I imagine, decide quite early that they mean to be a judge, or a bishop, or a Cabinet minister, and drill themselves to behave always as that kind of person ought to behave. Habit is second nature; it soon becomes easy to them to keep it up; their first nature never appears except when they lose their tempers, or fall in love, or get drunk.

Lord Haldane in his autobiography says that in his experience men who persistently demand things for themselves generally end by getting them. I do not think that I have found it so in my profession. There are some clergymen who are always sitting on the steps of No. 10 Downing Street. They ask for everything that comes along. (How

these things leak out I do not know; but they always do leak out.) A few of them get made bishops—not very good bishops as a rule; but most of them are soured and disappointed. The large majority of bishops have never asked for anything, though they may have gone into training for the mitres which were at last to drop on their heads. But I do not think there is too much ambition among the clergy. The ministry of the Church does not now attract men of this type.

A sense of humour is a great safeguard against the danger of wholesome emulation turning into sour ambition. For after all, are not the objects of ambition rather ridiculous? That the rewards do not go to the right people everybody knows. As Sir William Harcourt said, some get them who do not deserve them, and others deserve them who do not get them. So on the whole, he added, justice is done! If real justice will one day be done, as we are taught to believe, the payment will not be in this world's currency. In another currency perhaps it is more nearly done, even now, than we fancy. Our advice to those beginning the game of life must be: "Play to win, but don't forget that it is only a game." Ambition may be the sin by which "the angels fell"; but by it men rise. Life would be very dull without it.

IX

ESAU OR JACOB?

THERE was once a sporting parson whose stock-in-trade consisted of a heap of old sermons, from which he used to draw one at random for his Sundaydiscourse. On one occasion, as ill luck would have it, he found himself preaching from the text "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated." The sermon took a very conventional view of the transaction by which the elder brother lost his birthright. Our friend read on with increasing disapprobation, and at last, shutting the manuscript with a snap, he extemporized for the first time in his life. "And so, my brethren, you see that throughout this disgraceful affair Esau behaved like a gentleman and a sportsman, and Jacob like a dirty little Jew as he was."

The typical old-fashioned parson fell short in many ways of the more exacting standard of our day. He was not much of a priest. But he understood the layman's point of view, and, if he was an upright and clean-living man, he often had a very good influence in his parish. The layman rather likes Esau, and does not love Jacob at all.

The average layman, when he is thinking of the future of his sons, is apt to say to himself something of this kind: "I want my boys to be English gentle-

men—honourable, brave, industrious, useful members of society. I want them to be Christians of course; but I really don't care much whether they are what is called religious or not. I don't see that churchgoing and devotionality make a man any better. From my experience, if I want to know whether a man can be trusted to run straight, almost the last question I should ask is whether he is a communicant or a regular attendant at public worship. The most unselfish, upright, kind-hearted men and women of my acquaintance are most of them not outwardly religious; at any rate, no one would think of calling them saints. It seems to me that we could get on pretty well without churches and parsons, though I support them as old institutions."

Of course they do not talk in this way to the clergy; but it would do the clergy no harm to hear conversations of this kind. We naturally look at things from a professional point of view. We like people to show appreciation of our ministrations; by an easy transition, we assume that God loves the "good Churchman." I am afraid the clergyman's God is too often the Head of the clerical profession.

From what we read of the Twelve Apostles, I should gather that most of them were not naturally gifted on the side of religion. The very unintelligent misunderstandings of their Master's teachings which are recorded of them confirm this impression. The evangelists seem to enjoy telling us how again and

again the Apostles failed to understand a perfectly plain parable or maxim. Christ chose them, it appears, because they were true-hearted and generous men, men capable of making great sacrifices, brave and loyal men. It is a humiliating fact for us parsons that they were all laymen—fishermen, tax-collectors, and one nicknamed Simon the Zealot—the Bolshie, as we might say, for the Zealots were a group of anarchists. We used to think that one of the Twelve was a saint and a mystic—St. John; but what is said of him in the first three Gospels does not bear out this idea, and the difficulties in the way of believing that he wrote the Fourth Gospel seem to be insuperable.

The question whether we ought to sympathize with Esau or with Jacob has often been raised in another form, when we look at the contrasted characters of Martha and Mary in the New Testament. Rudyard Kipling has written a poem in which, as we might expect, he takes the view that Martha does all the work while Mary gets all the credit. Many divines have felt a difficulty in accepting the verdict that Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and left her sister to lay the dinner, had "chosen the good part." What would become of the world if we all behaved like Mary?

This is the case for Esau, the "profane person," the "gentleman and sportsman." We all have a tender place in our hearts for Esau, for he died by thousands in the trenches, and made no fuss about it.

But if Esau's friends go so far as to say that religion has nothing to do with conduct, and that it does not matter what a man believes, or whether he believes anything, they are talking nonsense. I do not know how Clough came to write: "The belief that religion is, or in any way requires, devotionality is, if not the most noxious, at least the most obstinate form of irreligion." Devotionality is an ugly word; if it means the habit of prayer, Clough's remark is obviously absurd, even as a paradox.

But we have admitted that the outwardly most pious people are not the best. Does this mean that they are hypocrites? Not necessarily, though there are a good many "Holy Willies" in the world, like the hypocrite whom Burns flayed in that merciless satire.

Some people have the gift of devotion, the mystical sense, and others have it not. It is not a measure of our acceptance with God, nor of our proficiency in grace. There are many excellent people who "live ever in their great Taskmaster's eye," doing their duty because it is their duty, but never carried out of themselves by any of the transports of devotion which saints and mystics describe. These people perhaps do not display much of the beauty of holiness, but they have what is still better, solid and steady goodness.

Others, on the contrary, have the gift of devotion strongly developed. They see the invisible; they pass readily into a kind of half-trance in which

they become aware of the world beyond the veil. Their testimony is just as trustworthy as that of other explorers. They have seen some of the mysteries of the spiritual world which ordinary people cannot see. Their witness is of great value, for in our day the centre of gravity in religion has shifted from authority to experience. The testimony of the saints is one of our chief grounds for belief.

In most cases this power of vision is the result of long and arduous training, and it is seldom found in conjunction with any serious faults of character. The saint is a man of genius, to be treated with the same respect, in his own line, that we pay to a great poet or discoverer. Such a man makes poor Esau look very common and vulgar, and we are not wrong in thinking so.

If we are quite without the gift of devotion, it is a defect in our make-up, like a lack of power to appreciate music or poetry. It is a defect to be deplored, and to be made good if possible. For if the spiritual world is real, and all about us and within us, it is a misfortune if we cannot come into contact with it. My favourite philosopher Plotinus thinks that we can all get into touch with it; we have only to call into activity a faculty "which all possess but few use."

He is probably right, if he means that we can all learn to pray. The plain truth is that most people never try seriously to acquire this power. If we spend about sixteen hours of our waking day in

thinking about this world, and a perfunctory five minutes in trying to remember our Maker and our immortal souls, this world naturally seems to us about two hundred times more real than the other. This must be so, however real the spiritual world may be. If we never think about it, it will be unreal to us.

Jacob the mystic, with his two wonderful visions, was, after all, a better man than Esau. He outgrew the trickiness of his character. There are few things in literature more impressive than the second vision, when he was about to meet his injured brother, who might have made up his mind to pay off old scores by murder. That lonely wrestle with an unknown adversary, who refuses to give his name, but at last does not refuse to give his blessing—is not this an allegory of human life?

Is the other wrestler a friend or an enemy? Does he mean well by us or ill? That wrestle in the dark is entailed upon us all, and we must not shirk it. When the day breaks, if we have striven to the end, we shall be told that we are the victors. But whether our mysterious friend-enemy is our lower self, or our guardian angel, or someone still greater—we shall not know. The name of that place was called Peniel, the Face of God. Esau the sportsman will never see it; he was too fond of red pottage.

THE CONDUCT OF LIFE

I

VISIONS AND REVELATIONS

MISS EVELYN UNDERHILL (to give her the name by which she likes to be known) has issued a revised edition of her famous book on Mysticism. It takes me back to more than thirty years ago, when I steeped myself in mystical literature while writing my Bampton Lectures on Christian Mysticism. I like to fancy that my book helped a little to call attention to the need for studying religion in its most intense and concentrated form. Miss Underhill has continued her researches ever since, and in her great book we have a wonderful picture of this strange adventure of the human mind. The psychologists, such as William James, have studied the subject exhaustively from their own point of view.

Every man and woman has two journeys to make through life. There is the outer journey, with its various incidents, and the milestones of youth, marriage, middle age, and senility. There is also an inner journey, a spiritual Odyssey, with a secret history of its own. The Epistle to the Hebrews compares it to a long-distance race, watched by a crowd of spectators, the spirits of the just made perfect, with Christ waiting at the goal.

The mystic is the man or woman who has resolved to take this inner pilgrimage very seriously indeed.

They are the athletes of the spiritual life, the explorers of the high places of contemplation. They refuse to be satisfied with the surface experience which we all share. Some power leads them on, like the knights of King Arthur in search of the Holy Grail. They will not stop till they have seen God face to face and merged their being in that supreme vision.

Nothing is more remarkable than the close agreement in their reports of what they have found. Mystical literature is monotonous for this very reason. It is often impossible to tell whether the description of the vision is written by a Neoplatonic philosopher or a Mohammedan Sufi or a Catholic nun. They all draw much the same chart of the ascent and they all have much the same experiences.

Of course they all tell us that they cannot describe what they have seen, and the reason is plain enough. Language was not made to express states of consciousness when, like St. Paul, men do not know whether they were in the body or out of the body. We cannot even describe a sunset which we saw last week, much less can the pilgrim be outside and inside the mystical state at the same time, as he would have to be in order to describe it.

Besides which, the vision is the reward of a very arduous self-discipline. Those who wish to see what they have seen must live as they have lived, and very few will make such a sacrifice. They all

give the same account of the course. The first stage is what they call purification, which consists in not only overcoming the temptations of the senses, but in stripping off everything that can come between the soul and the vision of God. Sometimes this "negative path" looks like the proverbial peeling an onion, till nothing is left. But the process is really one of intense concentration, a state of loving and longing for the felt presence of God. Severe asceticism is often practised, but it is not essential.

The next stage consists of rebuilding the self on a higher level. They call it illumination. Finally, there is the unitive life, in which, as they believe, the soul is carried up beyond itself into the heavenly places.

I repeat that all this is a genuine experience, which has been enjoyed by hundreds of perfectly sane people, some Catholics, some Protestants, some Mohammedans, some Pagans. Although they cannot tell us clearly what^v they have seen, they have all seen something of which they are very sure, and their witness, so far as it is explicit, agrees together.

It is easy to speak contemptuously of the whole matter. Why did these men and women make themselves so uncomfortable? Is it not easy to trace a sublimated eroticism in the female mystics of the cloister, who were clearly suffering from sexual "repression"? How absurd the methods

recommended for producing a trance—fixing the eyes on the tip of the nose, as the Indians recommend, or on the navel, like the monks of Mount Athos, or on a bright disk, like Jacob Boehme.

Were not most of the mystics very unhealthy in mind or body? Cannot psychology explain all their experiences without the hypothesis of there being any objective reality behind them? Are not the violent reactions which they called the Dark Night of the Soul sufficient evidence that the visions were produced by over-strained nerves?

No, this attitude really will not do. The bodily discipline was found empirically to be necessary in order to obtain the complete detachment which was the condition of the lonely quest. The saints of the cloister used the language of earthly love to describe their emotions because no other language was available. It is part of the mystical faith that love reveals more of the divine mysteries than intellectual speculation or active work. They found it to be so; and Christianity has always taught the same. Some of the female mystics were undoubtedly neurotic, and their raptures unwholesome; but this element has been much exaggerated by some modern critics.

The attempts to produce a state of trance artificially were probably a mistake, but they were found experimentally to be efficacious.

The great mystics have not, in point of fact, been poor specimens of humanity, but very far otherwise.

VISIONS AND REVELATIONS

Some of them, like St. Paul, Plotinus, Boehme, and our own William Law, were men of very robust intellect; Plotinus and Boehme have a place in all histories of philosophy. Others, like the two St. Catherines, of Siena and Genoa, and St. Theresa, were practical organizers as well as saints; the same may, of course, be said of St. Paul. But they must be judged, as we judge other eminent specialists, by their achievement in their own subject. Extreme specialization often makes people odd and gauche in society; the mystics were not more so than many poets and learned scholars.

As for the psychologists, their subject is the states of the human mind. They are not concerned to discuss whether the saints were actually in contact with divine realities or not. But in refusing to consider this question they virtually assume that the mystical vision is a hallucination, and in so doing they put themselves out of court. For the mystic cares nothing for states of consciousness. The sole object of his quest is to get in touch with absolute truth and reality. His testimony is that it is possible to rise from one plane to another in the spiritual life, always approaching nearer to the vision of things as they really are. If this is not possible he would be the first to admit that his whole life has been a mistake. But he has no doubt whatever that it is not a mistake. This assurance, based on immediate experience, is worth a great deal more than the psychologists and others allow.

They do not claim any special faculty for the apprehension of the divine. Plotinus says that it is a faculty "which all possess, though only a few use it." According to them, it is a gift which most people have in various degrees, but the ordinary man gives it no chance; he never attempts to train it.

As for the "Dark Night of the Soul"—the sense of spiritual dryness and misery which most of the cloistered saints describe, I am not sure what we ought to think of it. The philosophical mystics, whose discipline is hard thinking, the consecration of the intellect, seldom suffer from it, and we may be inclined to think that it is just a symptom of overstrain. But Miss Underhill thinks that the philosophic mystics never enter the inmost shrine, which is reserved for those who have drunk the cup of mental suffering to the dregs.

Why have I chosen this subject? Because the testimony of the mystics, though in a sense it is not transferable, is the strongest support that religion can have. We trust other men of genius in their own subjects; it is reasonable to trust the religious genius in his own subject. The mystic is not a crank; he has only developed to its furthest possibilities an experience which every religious person knows well—the experience of prayer, which is the mystical act *par excellence*.

Religion can only be understood from inside. What are called "evidences" will not help us

VISIONS AND REVELATIONS

much; but when the mystic tells us what he has seen, we may believe him.

If any of my readers would like to try a mystical book, I recommend *Revelations of a Divine Love*, by Julian of Norwich (Methuen). It is one of the choicest gems of medieval literature.

THOUGHTS ON READING

THE pleasures of reading have been celebrated by a thousand pens, for writers are generally great readers, and are professionally interested in encouraging the habit of reading. For my own part, I confess that books are for me the most indispensable of all the pleasures of life. I agree with the Old English Song :

Oh, for a booke and a shadie nooke,
 Eyther in doore or out;
 With the grene leaves whispering overhead
 Or the streete cryes all about;
 Where I maie reade all at my ease,
 Both of the newe and olde;
 For a jollie goode booke whereon to looke
 Is better to me than golde.

I can find pleasure in almost all books, except trashy novels, obsolete theology, law books, field sports (except when the hunter is properly mauled by a wild beast), and mathematics, which I cannot understand.

History may no doubt be divided into events which do not matter and events which probably never occurred; but it is a fascinating subject. It tells us, at least, a good deal about the historian; and historians are agreeable people. Of poetry

THOUGHTS ON READING

I do not read much, and when I do I choose the dead lion in preference to the live dog.

In philosophy and theology I do not read so much as I used to do because I find that if I agree with the writer I know most of what he wants to tell me, and if I do not, his arguments do not stick in my mind.

This is, I think, quite normal. The time for promiscuous and experimental reading is before we have quite found ourselves. Sooner or later, we arrive at the conclusions which for us are the only possible conclusions. They would not suit everybody, but for us they are the truth. Having reached this stage, it is waste of time to study writers with whom we have no sympathy.

If life has taught us to believe in one religion and philosophy, one cannot, at the age of sixty, resolve to try another. Indeed, I am inclined to think that we ought to read less and think more as we get older.

Some men's minds are obviously choked with their own erudition. "Reading," says Bacon, "makes a full man"; but if we fill ourselves too full, we shall suffer from chronic mental dyspepsia. It is not the great scholars who suffer in this way, but men of small intellects and much leisure, who have formed a habit of reading everything and filling notebooks.

Bookish conversation is generally bad conversation, though there are some people who can pass

illuminating comments on the books of the hour. But books about books are usually dismal things.

A man may justifiably spend his life in expounding some great system of thought, or in studying some very great author, such as Shakespeare or St. Paul; but the average commentator is a dull dog; he must be, or he would not have chosen to be a commentator. Our universities pay too much honour to these harmless necessary drudges, who are seldom men of great ability.

A great library is a melancholy place, though, as A. C. Benson says, old books are delightful to look at, "rows upon rows of big irregular volumes, with tarnished tooling and faded gilding on the sun-scorched backs. Old editions of classics, old volumes of controversial divinity, folios of the Fathers, topographical treatises, cumbrous philosophers, pamphlets from which, like dry ashes, the heat of the fire that warmed them once has fled." "That is the worst of erudition—the next scholar sucks the few drops of honey that you have accumulated, sets right your blunders, and you are superseded. You have handed on the torch, perhaps, and even trimmed it. Your errors, your patient explanations, were a necessary step in the progress of knowledge; but even now the procession has turned the corner and is out of sight."

An old library is painfully like the mummy-rooms in the British Museum. Would it matter much if ninety-nine per cent. of those old books, and

perhaps an equal proportion of new ones, were burnt? But then one thinks of the patient labour which went to the writing of them—the worst-paid work, perhaps, that is done under the sun.

John Addington Symonds calculated that during all the years when he was writing his great history of the Renaissance, his pen brought him in about fifty pounds a year net, and we all know that Milton sold the manuscript of *Paradise Lost* for £5. Milton had his posthumous revenge; but the scholar must expect to see his *magnum opus* superseded before he is gathered to his fathers.

How many minds really hand down the vast accumulations of the past? The number must be ludicrously small. A vigorous “dictatorship of the proletariat” might massacre the whole lot in six months. And each of them owns only one handful of the entire heap of erudition.

I remember that when I had passed my last examination at Cambridge I thought how delightful it would be to be no longer the slave of the examination Sphinx, so that I could browse at will over the unfenced fields of human knowledge. So I strolled into the university library, and as ill luck would have it, found myself in the room devoted to medical literature. After about two hours in that chamber of horrors I fled, half persuaded that I had got every disease in the encyclopædia, except perhaps housemaid’s knee. But I soon discovered that promiscuous and aimless browsing was waste

of time, and realized the truth of the motto which a scholar inscribed over the door of his library—*Humanae sapientiae magna pars est multa aequo animo nescire velle*—the wise man is content not to know a great many things.

The real danger of perpetual reading is that it becomes a mere habit, a method of self-indulgence. I confess that when I am paying an afternoon call, and my wife has shaken hands to say good-bye (which means that the call is about half over), my fingers itch to take up any books which lie on the drawing-room table.

I dislike motoring because it is impossible to read in a car with any comfort. This is obviously a weakness; it would be an excellent Lenten penance for me to open no book for a week.

I imagine that the subscribers to circulating libraries who ask the librarians to hand them out three fresh novels—they do not care which—every week, merely use the books to start a day dream. They take no particular interest in the plot, and forget the names of the characters before they have finished the novel. But the beautiful heroine who marries a duke or a millionaire, the noble young hero who performs prodigies of valour in the war, and comes home with the Victoria Cross and only one arm, is Mr. Mudie's client.

Most people have very drab lives, and live, when they can, in a world of the imagination. The novel helps them to people this world with romantic

figures, and makes the daily routine more tolerable. But this kind of reading is an anodyne, pure and simple. In excess, it is as harmful as any other kind of drug-taking.

Perhaps the most useful reading is that which enlarges the particular interests which occupy our working hours. The clergyman should study philosophy, psychology, medicine, or political economy. If he has a country parish, he may interest himself in the history of his neighbourhood, or in farming, or botany. The politician should study political philosophy and economics, and modern history. The doctor should study the ills of the soul as well as of the body, and the new sciences of heredity and eugenics.

The advantage of linking our leisure studies with our business work is that what we read is more likely to stick in our memory. I have often been keenly interested in a book entirely outside my own subjects, and then have found that it has entirely vanished from my recollection. This disappointing experience becomes commoner in later life.

What would most of us give to recover the retentive memory of a boy of thirteen! It is almost irritating to find that we still remember the "principal parts" of all the Greek verbs which are "irregular" to the verge of impropriety, when we might have been loading our memories with knowledge which we should be glad to have as a

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

permanent possession. But a rational system of education is still a dream of the future.

When all is said and done, books are an inestimable addition to the happiness of life. Those who can enjoy reading must often say, "Pray heaven I may keep my eyes as long as I shall want them!"

III

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MISER

A BIOGRAPHY has been written of Hetty Green, the notorious American miser. This woman died in 1916 at the age of eighty-one, leaving a fortune of nearly twenty-five million pounds. She had inherited considerable wealth and devoted a long life to the sole purpose of accumulation. She boasted that at the age of fifteen she already knew more about stocks and shares than many a man who makes a living out of them.

Even when she was the richest woman in the world she went about almost in rags, and supplemented the deficiency of her winter underwear with old newspapers. She had no fixed abode, and went from one cheap lodging-house to another. She took her meals at counters frequented by the poorest labourers. She was an expert tax-dodger, and is not recorded to have given away anything to anybody.

Hetty Green was not at all a typical American. The American financier is, in his queer way, a bit of a sportsman. He cannot resist a gamble; he spends his money freely, and often contributes largely to public objects; when he loses everything he takes his misfortune philosophically, and sets to work at

once to retrieve it. Hetty, on the contrary, was never a plunger. She invested shrewdly when other people were selling, and sold when other people wanted to buy. Mere accumulation at compound interest will produce a large sum in sixty years.

What is the psychology of that time-honoured comic figure, the miser? The stock arguments intended to convince him of his folly quite miss the mark. "He shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth," says the Psalmist. "There are no pockets in your shroud," says an Italian proverb. The miser knows that well enough. I have only heard one instance of a man who wished to take money away with him—a man who divided his fortune among three friends, an Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scotchman, on condition that each of them should put a hundred pounds into his coffin. The Englishman put in twenty five-pound notes. The Irishman borrowed a hundred pounds from the Englishman, and put them in. The Scotchman took out the two hundred pounds and put in a cheque for three hundred, payable to bearer. To his dismay, he found next day that the cheque had been cashed; he had forgotten that the undertaker was a Welshman.

A clerical friend of mine once remonstrated with an old Yorkshire manufacturer for continuing to pile up money which he did not want. "Why don't you take things more easily in your old age? You

know what kind of man your son is. He will play ducks and drakes with your money when you are gone." "Mr. —," the old fellow answered, "if it gives him half as much pleasure to spend my money as it has given me to make it, I don't grudge it him."

No; the genesis of the miser is more complex than the ordinary moralist realizes. I suggest that it is usually something like this: A young man, we will suppose, is rather deficient in natural sympathy and has no expensive tastes. He is also of an anxious temperament and disposed to play for safety. There are obviously two ways of squaring our accounts with life. We may diminish our numerator or we may increase our denominator. We may curtail our wants or we may augment our means of gratifying them. The miser tries to do both. In this way we may put a large margin between himself and what he most dreads—being hard up. In ruder times he buried or hid his savings and lived in fear of housebreakers. But in the century before the Great War men in Western Europe and North America lived in greater security than our race has ever enjoyed before. If a man was content with three or three and a half per cent. no anxiety need disturb his slumbers.

But this is not a complete explanation. There is no natural limit to human desires; they grow by what they feed on. To acquire wealth is a kind of success. In the pre-Snowden era a man would

chuckle over the large sum at which his will would be proved. The possession of money gives power, whether the power is used or not. What fun to watch the assiduous attentions of nephews and nieces, and then perhaps to disappoint them all—to “die and endow a college or a cat.”

Sometimes the miser has been hardly used in his youth, and has lived friendless—the common lot of the unsympathetic. Jay Gould seems to have belonged to this class. Then they nurse a grudge against the human race, and it pleases them to accumulate, and keep to themselves, a large amount of “what many men desire.”

But the prime motive, I think, is anxiety, brooded over till it becomes an irrational habit. And I think this is the reason why the Gospels seem to be so severe against accumulation. Christ condemned *worry* as a sin; it is one of the most original parts of His teaching. “Be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”

At the bottom of his mind, what the miser wants is to be invulnerable. There are various ways of aiming at this security. Nearly all the philosophies have this as their real object. Asceticism is one method—the asceticism of Diogenes the Cynic. Live in a tub on bread and water, and fate cannot touch you. “What can I do for you?” said Alexander

the Great to Diogenes. "Stand out of my light," replied the sage. What a triumph! "If I were not Alexander I would be Diogenes," said the conqueror of the world. Indian philosophy justifies this attitude by teaching that the external world does not exist—it is an ugly dream from which rapt contemplation can liberate us. Thousands of men and women, not in Asia only, have chosen this path of deliverance, and have found peace thereby.

Christianity, if I understand it rightly, is almost the only religion which does not promise to make us invulnerable. At any rate, it will not allow us to take any short cuts to freedom from externals. We are bidden to cultivate real sympathy—to rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep. If we lose a child we are not encouraged to console ourselves like the Greek sage by saying, "I never thought that I had begotten an immortal," nor with a Catholic mystic, "About this time I lost my husband and children, who were great obstacles to my devotional life." Nor should we say, with my teacher Plotinus, that if our native country is ravaged by an enemy we ought not to care much; "the actors change their masks," that is all. To run away from life in the world is too facile a way of escape; we can only overcome evil by facing it manfully.

In a word, "Safety first" is not a Christian maxim. Life is an adventure, in which we have to

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

take an active part and to run risks. Faith itself is an adventure; it begins as an experiment and ends as an experience. It may not be altogether a bad thing for us that nineteenth-century security (and "securities") are things of the past.

IV

CHOOSING A CAREER

I AM asked to join with other grave and reverend seniors who, after beginning life in the glorious position of a boy, and then perhaps, as in my own case, descending to the humble calling of schoolmasters, have now reached the lowest rung of the ladder as parents. We are invited to impart our collective wisdom to one another's sons, since we have probably given up admonishing our own. Whether it is of the slightest use to advise the young is another question.

I have heard of a youngster who, not very originally, remarked, "Poor old governor! He likes giving good advice. It consoles him for being no longer able to give a bad example." This is the common irreverence of youth.

But there is something in the schoolboy's derivation of *sermon* from *sero-moneo*, "I warn too late." We are always too late with our admonitions. The proper time to influence the character of a child is about a hundred years before he is born. And even the most careful and conscientious selection of grandparents does not always produce the desired results. Naturalists speak of atavism, the possibility of reverting to remote ancestors. The old Adam will out, even if his progeny has

been disguised as Sir John Adam, and finally as Lord Adam of Edenbridge.

Students of psychology are agreed that the most crucial years of life are those between twelve and twenty-five. What a boy becomes in those years, that he is likely to remain, in the fundamentals of his character, for the rest of his life. But this may not be a true way of putting it. Innate qualities may be coming out when schoolmasters or parents think that they are moulding the ductile material of a boy's mind.

It would be a comfort to know that in spite of all our best efforts we cannot do our children much mischief.

If a boy has a hobby early in life he ought to be encouraged to cultivate it. If we read the biographies of great poets, painters, musicians, naturalists, scientific discoverers, and others, we generally, though not always, find that they have begun their life's work as their play or hobby while still in their teens.

The happiest lot is that of men whose work is to do what they most enjoy doing, and which in consequence they probably do best. It is a great mistake to thwart a strong natural bent; though I admit that it would have annoyed me intensely if a son of mine had shown a burning wish to wear a red tie or a biretta. We must allow our sons to follow the gleam, wherever it leads them, and be glad if they feel themselves called to do and be something definite.

Sir John Seeley, in his *Natural Religion*, complains that in England, above all other countries, it is too common to see a man who might have been a leader in spiritual or intellectual progress "end ignominiously in a large practice at the Bar." Parents, I think, sometimes urge their sons to make the less generous choice in selecting a career. I know that a fairly good income is very important; but it is still more important that a man should follow the vocation for which he is best fitted, whether it happens to be well paid or not. For instance, if a young fellow has a real vocation for the ministry of the Church, his parents incur a great responsibility if they deter him from becoming a clergyman because church mice are proverbially poor. At present, however, it is the young people who show most reluctance to give themselves to this particular work.

I am not in favour of trying to force children's minds into an orthodox groove by dogmatic denominational teaching. For one thing, it is not treating them quite fairly, and, for another, the only kind of religion which is worth having is not to be taught. It is either caught, like measles, from someone who has it, or it is imparted directly by the Spirit of God, which, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth. But the moral teaching of the New Testament, the excellence of which few are found to dispute, is a proper subject of early education. It is a mistake, I am sure, to bring up

children as if no revelation had been made. I have seen the experiment tried, and it has been a failure.

In matters of conduct there is no harm in being a little strict, more strict than is customary to-day, though less strict than was common fifty or a hundred years ago. Children ought not to be allowed to run wild, and to break all the little rules of the household.

And what shall we say when our sons approach the age of falling in love and marrying, the age which the law facetiously calls the age of discretion? Lord Chesterfield was cautious. "In matters of religion and marriage," he said, "I never give advice; for I will have no man's torments in this world or the next laid to my charge." We might no doubt quote to the young people the counsel of the Scottish philosopher Alexander Bain, the author of *The Emotions and the Will*. "The occasion of osculation," said the sage, "should be adequate, and the actuality rare." But what is an adequate occasion? The boy might have his own ideas about this.

Nevertheless, there is one piece of good advice on which I will venture :

There is almost everything to be said for early marriage, except one. Young people are more apt to choose badly. How often do we see boys fluttering like moths round some heartless and brainless minx, while other girls, whom elder men can see to be all gold, are left uncourted and unnoticed! And, as for the girls, they seem to be sometimes unable to discern whether a young man is a

gentleman (not in the snobbish or merely external sense) or not.

My advice, then, is this, and I am sure it is sound. Since both men and women are good judges of their own sex and bad judges of the other, I would say to a young man who is thinking of marriage, "Choose a girl who has nice women for her friends, and pay no attention to what other men think or say of her." And to a girl, "Have nothing to say to a man who is not liked and trusted by other men."

These things are not very difficult to find out, and they may save dismal disillusionments when it is too late.

Sound religious principles are a great safeguard in days when unfaithfulness in marriage is so shamefully common. We may laugh at the Victorians, but would not every sensible man like to have a Victorian wife? It is all very well to follow St. Paul's advice and "put off the old man," but I should prefer for a daughter-in-law a girl who had not been in a desperate hurry to put on the new woman. How much more attractive were the girls that I remember twenty-five years ago! . . . But I guess I had better stop.

On the whole, I feel a great pity for the younger generation. Life was comparatively so easy for us, and it is going to be so hard for them. We grew up in an age of expansion and confidence; they have come in for an age of contraction and perplexity. The writing on the wall looked rather encouraging

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

for us; what they see is—well, not “*Mene, mene,*” like Belshazzar, but a gigantic note of interrogation. Does this bother them much? I really do not know, for they rarely take their elders into confidence.

V

DAY - DREAMING

THE palace in the clouds, which the French, I do not know why, call a castle in Spain, is for many people a satisfactory substitute for the terrestrial mansion which they will never possess. It is a magnificent building, commanding glorious prospects and replete with everything that is beautiful. There are no rates and taxes, no army of retainers to keep, no dilapidations. If we don't like it, we can blow it away and build another. Is the world around us very troublesome? Are we annoyed with our neighbours? Is our country, our church, or our business in a bad way? Then off we can fly to our palace in the clouds, where events are entirely under our own control.

We know so little what goes on in each other's minds that we cannot guess how much time most people spend in the phantom world of the imagination. There is no doubt that men and women differ enormously in this respect.

Some children, without any suggestion from their elders, invent a country of their own, a John-land or Herbertia, in which they can have everything their own way. All their experiences are transported, in an idealized form, to this Utopia, so that the world for them, like Wordsworth's "swan on

still St. Mary's Lake, floats double, swan and shadow"; and they are sometimes not sure which is swan and which shadow.

Does this habit persist through life, or do they come to think it dangerous, as it is, and try to kill it?

If we were writing a treatise on psychology we should have to distinguish between imagination, which is a creative faculty, and fancy, or reverie, which is idle, a mere mood of relaxation. But the distinction is not always easy to draw.

Wordsworth calls imagination "reason in her most exalted mood." Without it life would have no form and no colour. Wordsworth, like all the disciples of Plato, believed that the poetic imagination sees much more of the truth than prosaic observation. As a Frenchman said: "*Après tout, Dieu est le plus grand des poètes.*"

It is imagination that discerns—or, as some would say, creates—values, and modern philosophy is inclined to make the kingdom of values the most real part of our experience.

All religion, if we think candidly, except the formless intuitions of the mystic, is the work of the imagination; all its symbols and concrete images, all its visions of heaven and hell, belong to poetic rather than scientific truth. They are shadows of invisible reality to which the creative imagination gives visible form and colour.

The "successful man" seldom has much imagina-

tion; it is one of the secrets of his success. Nothing is real to him until he can see and handle it; his castle must not be in the air, but somewhere in the Home Counties.

A humorist (was it Charles Lamb?—I forget) hung on his walls sheets of paper inscribed with the names of old Masters. That would not suit the successful man nor the picture dealers. The successful man may know nothing about art; but he likes to have on his walls an object which someone else would be glad to buy for £10,000. Which really owns the picture—the purchaser who cannot appreciate it, or the connoisseur who can appreciate it but only keeps it in his mind?

Who really possessed Dante's Beatrice? Her husband, who probably found her a very ordinary young woman, or Dante, who wrote a *Vita Nuova* about her? And which was the real Beatrice? This question would take us too deep into metaphysics—too deep for me, at any rate.

While we are thinking of religion it is worth while to notice that the true mystic cares little about symbolism, and often dislikes it. His inner world is so rich in forms, sounds, and colours that he objects to having poor imitations of the sublime thrust upon his senses while he is communing with the Eternal. While the music of the spheres is ringing in his ears he would rather not hear an organ.

"*Quand une chose ne vaut pas la peine d'être dite, on la chante.*" This is the real explanation of the Quaker's

preference for a whitewashed barn to worship in. A priest genuflecting before an altar, a wax doll, or even a fine statue in the sanctuary, lights and incense and gorgeous robes would only distract his attention from the much more glorious vision which floats before his mind's eyes as he sits silent in his austere bare meeting-house. Similarly when he listens to a sermon he agrees with Dr. Johnson, who says of Watts: "He did not endeavour to assist his eloquence by any gesticulations, for, as no corporeal actions have any correspondence with theological truth, he did not see how they could enforce it."

But the South of Europe has no sympathy with this. The Mediterranean peoples, it has been said, have a strong tendency to think with their eyes. I am not suggesting that one taste is better than the other, but only that it is a mistake to charge the Quaker and his kindred with want of imagination and indifference to beauty.

Much of religious meditation is mere reverie, and it is not unkind to suggest that this kind of reverie is a great source of comfort to many who have lonely or unhappy lives. Their religion is an escape into a world of the imagination, which, as I have said, may be a more real world than the scene of their disappointments and troubles.

In cases like these it is very difficult to distinguish between the mere craving for an anodyne

and the genuine aspiration to come nearer to God. We are not called upon to judge.

There are many people who have not enough imagination to start a reverie without assistance, but who frequently long to escape from the worrying and humiliating surroundings of their daily life. This need is met chiefly by literature, to which must now be added the "Pictures." Who are the persons who carry off an armful of trashy novels every month from the circulating library, and why do they do it? A week hence they will have forgotten every incident in the book, and even the names of the chief characters. They have learned nothing from the book, which, indeed, seldom contains anything which could make anyone wiser. They have got from it just what they wanted—it has started them in a day-dream. For one or two happy hours they are the heroes and heroines whom they would like to resemble. It is an escape from a terribly dull life, and unluckily an unchecked indulgence in reverie tends to make it more dull, for it diverts the attention from whatever might have made it more interesting. The day-dreamer is apt to be dull of observation and deficient in sympathy.

What do savages think of in their long intervals of stolid silence? And what do dogs and monkeys think of when they seem to be deep in contemplation? An ape will sit for a long time looking as grave and wise as a Buddhist sage, and then

suddenly will begin, with equal gravity, to pick a straw to pieces. We know that dogs dream; do they also day-dream?

In any case, this wonderful faculty of transporting ourselves, with more than the speed of light, to any part of the universe and to any point of past or future time is one of the most mysterious elements in our make-up. In spite of all the abuses to which it may be put, it is, I think, a strong argument against materialism.

A recent philosopher has written a book called *The World as Imagination*, and there can be no doubt that whether we call ourselves idealists or materialists, our world is largely of our own making. The world of the practical man is a rather poor affair. He is like the pussycat of the nursery rhyme, who went to London to visit the queen. "Pussycat, pussycat, what saw you there? I saw a little mouse under a chair." That is just what the practical man does see, because he has no imagination.

VI

SEVENTY YEARS OLD

"THE days of our age are threescore years and ten," wrote the Psalmist at a time when comparatively few reached this allotted span of life. Actually, the tables of the Registrar-General inform me that my expectation of life on my seventieth birthday is 8·53 years, though if I had belonged to the superior sex, I might have looked forward to 9·58 years. These figures do not interest me much. My life's work, in any case, is nearly done, and I shall be quite ready to go whenever my call comes. An old man, when he thinks about himself, dwells on the past rather than on the future.

Memory is a strange faculty. We look back over a mist-covered country, in which certain peaks rise up very clearly, while patches of the plain are also in bright sunlight. The rest is dimmed, and much of it has disappeared altogether. The selection seems capricious. Many of the things which we remember most vividly are quite unimportant, and of some of them we may suspect that they have stuck in our minds just because they were not characteristic.

We turn hot or cold, according to our temperament, when we remember with shame certain things which we did long ago. But these are not

our habitual faults, but stupid blunders which we never meant to commit—thoughtless actions which looked like ingratitude, hasty expressions which were cruel or unjust, even breaches of good manners which have probably been long forgotten by those who witnessed them. Things done, seen, or suffered for the first time stand out vividly; they have cut a new channel in our minds, which has never filled up.

Our first home and its inmates remain very clearly in our memories; when we revisit the old familiar scenes we recognize them at once, though we thought they were on a larger scale. Later impressions are much weaker, just as we can still repeat the poetry and even prose which we learned by heart as children, though now if we laboriously learn a sonnet it will be half gone a week hence.

Have we been happy? Well, we are never either so happy or so miserable as we thought ourselves to be, and when we think of the past we shall probably admit with a rueful grin that half our troubles consisted in anticipating misfortunes which never came. But here again memory is treacherous. The good old times may not have been so good while we lived through them, and our troubles—the real ones—did not always occupy our minds.

Still, my own experience is that the question can be answered. I have no doubt that for the first twenty-eight years of my life the balance was on the wrong side. The causes were almost entirely subjective. I was a painfully shy, nervous, and

anxious child; and at Eton and Cambridge I worked much harder than any boy who cares for his health and happiness ought to work.

Ambition is either the luxury of the happy and confident, or the refuge of the anxious and despondent; in my case it was certainly the latter. But from thirty onwards, and especially since my marriage, I have no doubt that my balance has been on the right side; I have been, on the whole, a happy man. I wonder whether this is a normal experience. We usually think of youth as the happiest part of life; I have not found it so. But I could not say with Browning, "Grow old along with me, The best is yet to be." To watch oneself becoming a back number and a fossil cannot be a pleasant experience, even if our friends find it out sooner than we do, and hide it from us with ironical civility. I think middle age is the best time, if we can escape the fatty degeneration of the conscience which often sets in at about fifty.

But it is a poor thing to think about our own happiness. What does it matter whether we are happy or not? We were sent into the world to do and to be something, to cultivate a little bit of garden, to defend a little bit of line, to pay our footing in the world in one way or another. If we are Christians, we believe also that we are on our probation as immortal spirits. The question which demands an answer, more and more insistently as life draws to a close, is whether we have used our

lives well or made a mess of them. What have we to show for the five talents, or two, or one, which were committed to us? Not much will be demanded of the man with one talent, and the man with five usually gets plenty of encouragement; but how many young men with two talents seem to be preparing their napkin! However, it is not for us to answer this question. We may feel satisfaction or remorse; but it may be that neither is justified.

An old German philosopher, Richard Rothe, writes: "A retrospect of my whole life, from the earliest period of my recollection down to the present hour, leaves me with this impression, that I have been and am being guided by a gracious and mighty Hand, which has made and is making that possible to me which otherwise would have been impossible. O that I had always trusted and yielded myself to its guidance."

I must say quite simply that I feel the same. I do not mean that I can trace what are called special providences, or that I have been always saved from bad mistakes. Still less can I say that the discipline has been always gentle. The mere inheritance of such a temperament as I have described might be called an injustice if we could put in a claim to be always enjoying our lives. But I can make my own the words, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me"; and my conviction of this loving care has grown stronger with me as the years go on. This experience I believe to be normal,

and it is the most natural explanation of the fact that most agnostics, if they live to old age, end by believing in God, though they may not be orthodox Christians. In a matter of this kind we need not think of "senile decay." It is the experience of life when life is prolonged to its natural termination, which in many cases—judging by their writings—has taught sceptics to become religious.

"The years that bring the philosophic mind" gradually change the cocksure Radical into a cautious Whig, and the Whig into a despondent Tory. We cannot help it; it is human nature. The average age of our population rises year by year. Will this tend to stability in our institutions, or to a timid disinclination to try new experiments? Well, the young people have got votes, and mean to use them. They cannot make a much worse hash of the world than their elders have done.

MAXIMS FOR OLD PEOPLE

"The tragedy of growing old is remaining young."

"The deeds of the young, the counsels of the middle-aged, the prayers of the old" (Greek proverb).

"Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel).

"The night cometh when no man can work" (Gospel of St. John).

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

“But at my back I always hear
Time’s wingèd chariot hurrying near,
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.”

(Andrew Marvell).

“Old age hath yet his honour and his toil”
(Tennyson).

“Though our outward man perish, the inward
man is renewed day by day” (St. Paul).

“The good man feels old age more by the strength
of his soul than by the weakness of his body” (Sir
Thomas Overbury).

“But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou
shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the
days” (Daniel).

VII

IS SILENCE GOLDEN?

"SILENCE is a virtue which endears man to man," wrote a schoolboy essayist.

There are times when it does. In a railway carriage, for example. I suggest that the railway companies, instead of labelling some compartments "Smoking," which nobody objects to nowadays, should reserve compartments for "Talkers." There are some persons, nearly all of the female sex, who suffer from a chronic rush of words to the mouth. When two of them get together they just give each other time to take breath; the inane cackle never ceases.

The diplomatists have, of course, learned to be silent in about six languages; but they also know that language was given us to conceal our thoughts. The proverbs of all nations agree in commending silence to all who do not wish to give themselves away, "Speech is silver, silence is gold," to which we may answer that though gold (while there was any) was a pleasant thing to have in a cash-box, what we want for everyday purposes is small change.

Since word is thrall, and thought is free,
Guard well thy tongue, I counsel thee.

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

If you your lips would keep from slips,
Five things observe with care:
Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,
And how, and when, and where.

Before we have answered all these questions to our satisfaction the conversation will have wandered on out of sight.

Carlyle, as Mr. Birrell says, preached the gospel of silence in thirty-seven octavo volumes. His "heroes" were strong silent men, whose principle was a word and a blow and the blow first. That is the dream of the thinker and man of words. The real men of action are generally canny opportunists, and many of them—not all, certainly—are great talkers, who make up their minds by thinking out loud. Carlyle was peculiarly unfortunate in giving as an example the "strong silent Russians," for the Russians are the most inveterate talkers in the world. And as for the strong silent English, we get through a good deal of talking vicariously, through newspapers and broadcasting.

The ancients amused themselves with stories of the taciturnity of the Spartans, who never wasted a word. Mr. Coolidge, the ex-President of the United States, earned the same reputation. One Sunday morning, when he came back from church, someone asked him, "What was the sermon about, Mr. President?" "Sin," said Mr. Coolidge. "And what line did the preacher take, sir?" "Against," said the President.

IS SILENCE GOLDEN?

On another occasion, a lady sitting next him at dinner said, "Mr. President, I have made a bet that I will get you to say three words to me during dinner." "You've lost," said the President—quite properly, I think. After Theodore Roosevelt, a taciturn President must have been something of a relief to the Americans.

Seneca wrote a fine line to the effect that "small troubles speak; great troubles are silent." The Greek dramatists, who were hampered by the convention that not more than two or three actors might speak on the stage together, used silence with great effect. The long silences of Prometheus while he is being nailed to the rock, and of Cassandra when Clytemnestra upbraids her, are deeply impressive. Shakespeare knew the poignant effect of the shortest possible answers, like "he has no children," in *Macbeth*. But stoicism on the stage is very difficult; the audience knows that the actor is repressing, with enormous self-restraint, emotions which he does not feel.

Circumstances sometimes deny us the relief of speech. "Well, Reverend, I guess that is the most profane silence I ever listened to," said an American to his minister, who had fozzled a drive and broken his favourite wooden club.

The honour paid to silence in religion and philosophy is a curious chapter in the history of the human mind. The necessity of abstaining from ill-omened words is felt by all primitive peoples,

and the feeling survives in some modern superstitions. The easiest way of avoiding unlucky speeches is obviously to say nothing at all. In the ritual of Mithra the initiates were enjoined to "lay thy right finger on thy mouth and say 'Silence!' three times. Silence is the symbol of the living God."

All the mystics have observed periods of silence. The disciples of Pythagoras had to keep silence for a year—some say even three years. Socrates remained immersed in silent meditations for several hours at a time. The only kind of prayer recommended in the Gospels is silent prayer behind a closed door.

In the monasteries silence was and still is an important part of the discipline. The rule was carried to its furthest extreme by the Reformed Cistercians or Trappists, who are seldom allowed to speak to each other. One might suppose that nothing could well be more unwholesome, more calculated to dehumanize a man and reduce his mind to a vacancy, but one must not condemn a time-honoured rule without inside knowledge.

The Quakers prescribe silence during their meetings for public worship, and in preparation for it. Personally, I find silent worship very helpful, but only for a few minutes; I cannot prevent my thoughts from straying if the silence is protracted. But no doubt this is largely a matter of habit. I have a good deal of sympathy with Professor Whitehead's saying that "Religion is what a man does with his own solitude"; nothing is more alien to me than

what Huxley called "Corybantic Christianity"—noisy music and processions and the exploitation of mass-psychology. But, as the old saying goes, it takes all sorts to make a world—and a national Church.

Our urban civilization is intolerably noisy, and many people do not seem to mind. Others do mind, and long to bury themselves in the country. Poor Marcus Aurelius writes "to himself": "Men seek out retreats for themselves, cottages in the country, lonely seashores and mountains. Thou, too, art disposed to hanker greatly after such things; and yet this is very stupid, for it is in thy power, whenever thou wilt, to retire into thyself. No place is quieter than one's own soul."

I am afraid this pagan saint lived so much in the inner silence that he was not at all a good emperor. Perhaps we may let Goethe have the last word: "A talent is formed in silence, but a character in the stream of the world." We should not like to live in the moon, where there is no sound: "*Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie.*"

VIII

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

JOHN GILPIN and his wife had been married for twice ten tedious years before it occurred to that model citizen to take a holiday—for one day. Scrooge reluctantly allowed Bob Cratchitt to be absent from the office on Christmas Day. Bank Holidays were then unthought of.

We can hardly imagine living in such a world. Our ancestors may have been as happy as we are; but if they were, either they are to blame for being content with such monotony or we for not making the most of our larger opportunities.

What do we especially look forward to as the day of our summer holiday approaches? I will speak for myself. First, there is the pleasure of getting into comparatively rational clothes, after stewing in a heavy black frock-coat and the rest of the absurd habiliments of an Anglican dignitary.

Then there is the prospect of a long railway journey with a book—no motor-cars for me, if I can help it. Then there is the arrival at a hilly district in the West Country, with bright light, clean air, and quiet—a most welcome change from the City of London and the dangers of constantly crossing the street which separates my house from the Cathedral. (A wit has said that Sir Christopher

Wren's epitaph ought to be changed into "*Nisi monumentum requiris, circumspice*"—"If you don't want your name on a tombstone, look out!")

I do not look forward to dropping my work for a month, for I enjoy my work, and take some of it with me, but I do look forward to the sense of physical well-being which comes from days in the open air and from acquiring and satisfying a country appetite.

But to live with unspoilt nature ought to bring us higher pleasures than these. No doubt it ought, but sometimes it does not. Perhaps we prepare ourselves by reading Wordsworth, and then find that with the best intentions we cannot draw from "the meanest flower" "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." It is useless to try to force ourselves; we are not all potential Wordsworths; and even the Nature-poets have lamented that mountains and lakes do not always convey any intelligible message to them.

Still, we have moved a long way from the eighteenth century, when John Wilkes, on a Continental tour, wrote: "The Apennines are not near so high or so horrid as the Alps. In the Alps you will see very few tolerable spots"; and when Humphry Clinker has nothing better to say about Durham than that "it appears like a confused heap of stones and brick, accumulated so as to cover a mountain." "The cathedral," he adds, "is a huge, gloomy pile, but the clergy are well

lodged. The bishop lives in a princely manner, and the golden prebends keep plentiful tables."

There are no "golden prebends" now, and no princely or luxurious living. It is to be hoped that the public will respond generously to the appeal not to allow the old castle of the bishop, which is now the home of the University, to slide down into the Wear.

Johnson and Lamb, of course, were incorrigible Cockneys. Lamb confesses that he "often shed tears in the Strand from fullness of joy at so much life." How he must have enjoyed writing to Wordsworth: "Your sun and moon and skies and hills and lakes affect me no more than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. . . . So fading upon me from disuse have been the beauties of nature, as they have been called; so ever fresh and green and warm are all the inventions of men and the assemblies of men in this great city."

We must charitably hope that among the millions who seldom leave London there are many who share these peculiar tastes.

It is probably true that (as Mr. McDowall says in his excellent book, *Nature and Man*) there should be something of man in the country, but not too much. In rural France, "where the very body of nature seems to have been scoured and scrubbed away by industrious neighbours," there is too much; in the Andes, I imagine, there is too little.

The delight in really wild country is a sophisticated thing; it annoys those who have to live in it, for they dislike and almost fear solitude. They have not quite outgrown primitive paganism; the spirits of the wild are too near to them, and disturb their minds.

To play with pantheism gives us agreeable sensations, which, we flatter ourselves, are also very elevating; but real nature-worship is not pantheism but animism, in which there is a large element of fear. W. H. Hudson's story, *The Thorn*, is an admirable picture of how mysterious powers may still seem to emanate from an old tree.

Two recent writers have described the "apple-wassail" at Bratton in Somerset—"men singing and dancing round a tree and throwing cider over it; and then leaving a piece of toast in the branches as they go away firing off guns, shouting and stamping." The toast must be a real offering to the tree-god; the cider is the life-blood of the old tree, and will renew it. This is the kind of survival which delights anthropologists; if the Brattonians have now abolished the custom I apologize to them.

Many people are half persuaded that there is some *mana* (as savages call it) about a great tree. George MacDonald in his *Phantastes* works upon this idea. There is perhaps nothing in nature more beautiful than a fine beech, though I have sometimes doubted whether the Greeks, with their exaggerated love of symmetry, would have seen

the beauty of it as we do. It would be a shock to know that the mathematical Plato preferred a puzzle-monkey.

There are some, and I think I am one of them, who, "in the downhill of life, when I find I'm declining," would choose "a cot that o'erlooks the wide sea." I like Keats's lines about "the moving waters at their priestlike task of pure ablution," and the Greek saying that "the sea washes away all human ills."

But very few poets or prose writers have sung well about the sea. Sailors have been seen to shake their heads even at Conrad, who, they say, was always a Central European, not a descendant of the Vikings; and Swinburne's sea is the sea of the swimmer, not of the mariner.

It is a commonplace that we half create and half perceive whatever we admire in nature. Wordsworth would have us prepare ourselves for it as for a sacrament. Some kind of discipline, some withdrawal into one's self, some elevation and consecration of the thoughts, are necessary before we can hear the message of woods and lakes and hills.

That is true, and we ought to remember it. But nature, after all, has a good deal of sympathy with the child and the savage in us. When Wordsworth was drinking in the early impressions of the Lake Country which were to be a large part of his poetical capital for life, he was a reckless and

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

noisy boy, climbing, skating, birdnesting, not merely contemplating.

Man was a hunter long before he was a philosopher, and these primitive tastes crave for satisfaction. For many men a holiday means mainly an opportunity to be a barbarian for a month or so; perhaps many a married woman equally enjoys reverting to huffer-mugger, as most women do who have no men to keep house for.

It is no use to go to nature for comfort when we are in great trouble. The inanimate then becomes inhuman, and either makes no response or echoes back our own moods. Nature is probably most eloquent to lovers. If there are any mysterious sympathies running through the whole texture of the creation, as the mystics have supposed, we can understand how young persons in this condition seem to themselves to have tapped the force which "makes the world go round," and think that they can catch something of the music of the spheres.

Shall we ever have the sense to take our holidays in June instead of in rainy August? There is everything to be said for the change, and such perverse institutions as schools and Parliament would have to adapt themselves to it. It is in the early summer, not in the late summer, that our country is incomparably beautiful, and many town-dwellers never see it at its best. Still, August is pleasant enough in some years; let us hope that in 1928 it will be as unlike as possible to 1927.

■

A TIME OUT OF JOINT

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I

WOMEN IN POLITICS

It would be interesting to know, but indiscreet to inquire, whether any of the huge majority of the House of Commons who voted to extend the franchise to girls between twenty-one and twenty-five honestly believed that they were doing a good day's work for their country. The results for the Conservative Party will probably be disastrous, and it will serve them right. They have been playing Disraeli's old game of "dishing the Whigs," and we all know that it was his own head which adorned the charger.

Young people who have just attained the years of indiscretion (as they ought to be called) are on the side of any party that will attack. Red flag processions are composed of youths with smooth faces. All young people with soft hearts tend to be Socialists at twenty-one; only those with soft heads are Socialists twenty years later. The only consolation is that, as the average age of the population is slowly rising, each election will show a slightly increased proportion of those to whom years have brought the philosophic mind.

The flapper vote is perhaps the last kick of that discredited theory—doctrinaire democracy. "All men and women are born equal, and therefore all

should have the same share in governing the country." The premise is untrue, and the conclusion does not follow from it. Human beings are born unequal, and the only persons who have a right to govern their neighbours are those who are competent to do so. Universal suffrage has always brought with it the end of popular government. It refuses to work, and the absurdity of it is too patent.

Women reach maturity earlier than men, and this may be urged as a reason for giving them votes at least not later than the other sex. Certainly no one in these days would suggest that the superficial differences which distinguish the sexes should determine the right to exercise the franchise. Modern conditions have favoured the evolution of an intermediate sex, the he-woman, who often shows great administrative ability. And some she-women (this specification is not American, but Homeric) are more efficient citizens than the majority of men. This is an argument for disfranchising some men, not for enfranchising all women. It is still possible to hold that on an average women are less likely to be useful politicians than men.

In comparing the two sexes, some marked differences may seem irrelevant to our present purpose. In muscular power, such as is required for the work of a railway-porter, or for driving a golf ball, three women are about equal to two men.

The German scientist, Waldeyer, finds that there is only one muscle in the body which is better developed in a woman than in a man. It is hardly necessary to say that the one exception is the muscle which wags the tongue.

The ratio of two to three, which ever since the Middle Ages has been usual in computing the value of female labour, is not masculine tyranny; it is the roughly calculated result of experiment. It is probable that this discrepancy might be reduced under a different system of training, but without ever reaching equality.

But what of those mental qualities which are more important in politics than physical strength? Women are psychologically less variable and temperamentally more violent than men. Genius in women is extremely rare. Even in music, where they have every advantage, it would be difficult to name any female composer who has reached even the second class. In religion they might be expected to lead, but they do not. An eminent anthropologist finds that they are always content to follow. Men (he says) make gods, and women worship them.

There is one difficult art, namely, kingcraft (as that egregious failure James I used to call it), in which it has been maintained that women are superior. History records several great queens. But if we examine the evidence, we shall find that the reason is that queens are generally guided by

wise men and kings by foolish women. On the other side, it is fair to say that idiocy is much more common in the male sex.

The majority of women care very little about politics. They are (perhaps fortunately for the race) too much absorbed in what the Germans call the three K's—Cooking, Clothes, and Children. When they do air their political views, we observe that they tend to be either die-hard Conservatives or rabid Socialists. During the war it was usually the women who wished to exterminate everyone who had had the misfortune to be born between the Rhine and the Vistula.

Women, as a rule, have no leaning to compromise; moderation is a quality which they do not value. It is very doubtful whether they are more merciful than men. One of His Majesty's judges told me that the percentage of convictions has risen slightly since women were admitted to serve on juries. No doubt a pretty girl has less chance of being wrongfully acquitted when her own sex takes a part in determining her guilt or innocence.

As a rule, women form very summary judgments of character. In appraising their own sex they are usually right; in dealing with the other sex they are very often wrong. For this reason, it is a golden rule for young men who want to marry to choose a girl with good women friends, and to pay no attention to the opinion of other men. It is equally

important for a girl to choose a man who is liked and trusted by men, and to disregard what her girl-friends say. (I find that I have said this twice; but it is worth saying twice.)

Are we in any danger of being governed by women, now that women voters will be in a majority? And what effects, short of this, may be expected to follow this wholesale enfranchisement of the female sex?

It is not at all likely that the women will all vote the same way. There will not be a woman's vote, any more than a man's vote. But some effects may be traceable. The average of manly beauty in the House of Commons is likely to show a small increase. The Catholic and Anglo-Catholic vote will be somewhat more important. Masculine luxuries, especially alcohol, will not be indulgently treated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There may be some tendency to sentimental or emotional legislation. But the power of women is not exercised mainly through the vote; and there is a real danger that in grasping at what they think their rights women may lose their privileges, which are much more valuable to them.

Count Keyserling, the philosopher, has lately published his views on American civilization. America, he says, is a two-caste country, the women forming the higher caste, the men the lower. The tradition of culture is maintained solely by the women, the men forgetting their education as soon

as they go to work. Prohibition was brought about by the women, in their maternal protectiveness. "Women do not need stimulants. With their great power to accomplish their will in this country, they have deprived the man of his liquor. They want to make him a good boy." "The man who works is always the slave of the woman who does not work." "I have seen many American women who look like queens, but I have never seen an American man who looks like a king."

The curious development of the Great Republic into a matriarchate of ice-water drinkers has obviously not much to do with female suffrage, though Prohibition would not have been carried without the women. In other countries where the women have had votes for some time it is not easy to trace any other effects upon politics beyond a tendency to legislate against alcohol. And Keyserling warns us against thinking that the destiny of Europe, and of England in particular, is to be Americanized.

"The English and the Americans speak the same language, but are entirely different in all other respects, such as the lack of reserve among Americans and the extreme cultivation of it by Englishmen; extreme privacy there, extreme publicity here (in New York); the highly developed political sense of the Englishman, and the absolute want of it in the American; the lack of any essential likeness between the two peoples."

However this may be, I do not think that England will be a woman-directed country. The effect of the new extension of the franchise will be to depress still further the average intelligence of the electorate, and to make our political system still more unmanageable; but there is something to be said for carrying an absurdity to its logical conclusion. It may bring the next political experiment nearer, though what it is to be I cannot even imagine. It can hardly be a change for the worse.

ATAVISMS

As members of the human race, we seldom remember, or, rather, we have not yet learnt, either how old we are or how young we are. If our geologists and anthropologists are right, we are only beginning to toddle. There is no reason (so we are told) why mankind should not be in existence ten million years hence, though, as all our coal and oil will have come to an end long before that time, it may be rather chilly in winter. And it is a bold assumption that our remote descendants will be recognizably human. But in all probability by far the greater part of our racial life lies ahead.

What lies behind is half a million years at least, a long enough time to form very inveterate habits. When we see *homo sapiens* belying his self-chosen name more egregiously than usual, he is generally obeying the prompting of some instinct which may have been useful to him in the five hundred thousand years before civilization was thought of. It may be useful to him again some day, for civilization is a disease from which nations seldom recover, and the barbarians may have the last word.

Meanwhile we are encumbered with a variety of atavistic tastes which can find no outlet in our regular work. We are partially domesticated animals

with instincts which belong to the wild state. Even dogs, who have adapted themselves to civilized life better than we have, and are morally superior to the average man, are sometimes betrayed by instinct. They will gorge themselves with meat, if they get the chance, like wolves, forgetting that they have their regular meals.

But we have devised a cunning plan for letting off steam—we call it play. Our games are mock-fighting, our sports are mock-hunting. And what are our concerts and oratorios but playing at what was once a very serious business—the placating of evil spirits by noisy incantations? The play must recall the real business of savage life, or we do not care for it. Shooting at a target instead of at birds would be counted dull, and it is the sham fight which gives zest to team-play. Even business firms could often make more money by ceasing to compete, but without the rivalry where would be the fun? It does not matter a pin whether the bosses who govern America call themselves Republicans or Democrats, but the Americans must have their sham fight, and, like the crowd at Ephesus, they will shout for two hours (or longer) that Diana, or Smith, or Thompson is “great.”

Unfortunately, the instinct of pugnacity is so strong that it cannot all be carried off by games and politics. After a generation or two of orderly and rational behaviour yahoomanity says “Ouf !” and demands the real thing, hot

and strong. So we have the most ruinous of all survivals—war.

War is not primitive. The so-called lower animals never make war; the only exceptions are those over-civilized creatures, the bees and ants, which, like ourselves, own wealth and suffer from over-population.

Man seems to have been comparatively peaceful until the discovery of metals, three or four thousand years ago. While we were nomad-hunters we killed the wild beasts, seldom each other. Is it possible that war is a passing phase, belonging not to the infancy but to the childhood of humanity? Recent psychologists have said that the combative age in children is between the ages of nine and twelve, which would roughly correspond to the "beginnings of civilization," as our descendants will call the period in which we are living.

Types of civilization flourish because for a time they have a survival value. The Roman Empire was made necessary by the barbarians, the Catholic Church by pagans and heretics. But when the conditions change survivals become inconvenient. For instance, Spain was the leading nation in Europe when there was a demand for the two types in which she specialized—fighting men and priests. But since the decay of feudalism a new type—the economic man—has come to the front, and in Spain there was no room for him.

In some ways the fighting man and the praying

man are much nearer to ancestral human nature than the money-making man; but the time for these specialized types was over. Both the warrior and the priest—especially the latter—became obstacles to progress and a burden which the nation had to support. The competitive economic man, relieving his primitive instincts by the games, sports, and political sham fights which we have described, has supplanted the monk and the knight. Even wars are now, in the opinion of many, attempts to seize markets and raw materials; though in reality they are a revolt of the natural man against a life so unlike what he has been used to for thousands of years.

The bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe came to a sudden end in 1848 simply because "France was bored." For nearly two thousand years, as Julius Caesar testifies, the Gaul has cared chiefly for two things—fighting and witty talk. In spite of all temptations to be content with middle-class comfort, he kicked against the pricks, and voted away his liberties, by an overwhelming majority, to a pinchbeck Napoleon.

Fabian Socialism—that farmyard of tame animals—would equally suffer shipwreck on the instincts of human nature. Man is not a wolf, but still less is he a sheep. He is combative, and likes the excitement of a rough game. We see with surprise how a boy who has had all the easy comforts of a public school and university will

eagerly throw himself into rough and hard work in a distant colony, where he can live, as he says, "a man's life." Even the war, with all its horrors, was a kind of liberation for many who took part in it.

The economic man was always a fiction of the economists, if they supposed that he ever existed as a pure type. But the industrial age has given a character to the men of our time. The most representative members of our society have been strenuous, acquisitive, and individualistic in a way in which their ancestors were not. Is this type, which has not had time to strike a deep root, likely to be permanent? I think not. The economic man, when he has achieved his ambition, tends to die out, because his instinct is to appropriate rather than to produce, and because he comes into sharp conflict with rivals of his own sort.

Perhaps we may see in the present predominance of the banker and speculator over the merchant a sign of the incipient decline of the industrial State. The masses, who now possess political power, seem to have made up their minds no longer to give the money-spinner a free hand to accumulate. It is felt that the new wealth has been really created by the new machines; that it belongs to nobody; and that it may be used to raise the standard of civilization in the nation as a whole. Rightly or wrongly, the democratic countries will act on this principle, and the acquisitive type of man, the

human squirrel or magpie, will lose his prestige and his advantages.

The future may be with those nations who can produce a still newer type—the man who is adapted to social service. This word is already a rather wearisome parrot-phrase, but it may indicate a type which will have a greater survival value in the future than either the knights and monks of the Middle Ages or the acquisitive “successful man” of the nineteenth century. Some already speak of this last type as an inconvenient survival.

But we must not belittle the achievements of robust individualism. To this type belong all the pioneers, in the things of the mind and spirit no less than in invention and the production of wealth. A social system which leaves no scope for self-assertive individuality is doomed to stagnation and petrification. It is precisely because humanity has possessed a unique power of throwing off freaks, rebels, and original characters who refuse to keep step that it has advanced beyond the brute and the savage, and has hitherto escaped the mechanical tyranny of the beehive and anthill.

The worst of all survivals, as we have said, is war, and there is no reason why a psychological substitute should not be found for it. “Man is above all an artist,” says Élie Faure. “He only rejects those forms of art that are exhausted. The desire of perpetual peace will not kill this form of art unless the conditions of peace involve a new method of

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

warfare, with the same sudden and collective intoxication, the same shining responsibilities, the same creative risks, the same atmosphere of voluntarily accepted tragedy." The service of man may surely offer these chances of heroism from time to time; and for the rest, let us not forget the purgative value of competitive games. It is not for nothing that these flourish most in the least militaristic nations.

III

INTERNATIONAL HATRED

MR. STEPHEN GWYNN has won well-deserved compliments for his edition of the *Letters of Sir Cecil Spring Rice*. His tact in effacing himself and allowing an admirable letter-writer to tell the story of his own public career and his many friendships cannot be praised too highly, and the connecting paragraphs in small type give the reader all the help he needs.

It is one of the most interesting books of its kind that I have read for a long time.

I remember Spring Rice well at Eton—a good-looking, rather sallow boy, with long brown hair which he dashed back from his forehead. He was one of the group of “intellectuals” who gathered round J. K. Stephen and amused themselves by annoying the “Bludgers” in Sixth Form when the present Sir Edwin Perry, M.D., was Captain of the School.

Spring Rice wielded a mordant pen; I have mercifully forgotten who was the victim of the savage poem beginning, “The World, the Flesh, and Satan once Agreed to patronize a dunce.” We all knew then for whom it was meant.

His character and powers as a diplomat come out clearly in his correspondence, both in his own

letters and in those from Roosevelt, Lodge, Luxmoore, and others. His only defects seem to have been an anxious and rather pessimistic temperament, and (after his health gave way) occasional spurts of impatience. Against these must be set a noble and almost devouring patriotism, a most winning and sympathetic nature, and an astonishing gift for penetrating the psychology of the nations to which he was sent.

He was among the first to discern the boundless ambitions of Germany, and he dreaded the Russian Colossus hardly less. The statesmen at home regarded him as an alarmist, but, unfortunately, his fears proved to be well grounded.

I am not writing a review of the book; I am writing because it made me unhappy, and I think it must make all lovers of peace unhappy. Like many others in my profession, I have been preaching for the League of Nations and advocating disarmament. And here we find one of the ablest of our ambassadors, a man of the highest Christian character, reiterating his conviction that nothing except force has any influence in international politics, that treaties and agreements are made only to gain time and then to be repudiated, and that a nation which is known to be pacific must expect to be insulted, abused, and wronged at every turn.

Wherever he went, he found the same atmosphere of violent hatred and suspicion, the same contempt for reasonableness not backed by threats.

INTERNATIONAL HATRED

"Russia and France act on the principle that it is safe to insult anyone who won't fight." (1895.)

"It appears that Germany hates France more than England, and it is still to be hoped that Germany hates England less than she does France." (1896.)

"I wish people would learn defensive patriotism—that is, to love their own mothers without hating other people's. This people (the Germans) are exactly the contrary: they have a perpetual well of malice springing in their hearts."

"The sum of the whole tendency here is to organize a continental alliance against England." (1897.)

"Russia, like a vulture, was watching dying Turkey, intending to eat it when it was dead and rotten. But Germany has come in with an antiseptic; Turkey is no longer edible." (1898.)

"Bismarck, impenetrable to the assaults of affection, allowed himself one luxury of emotion—to hate." (Ludwig says the same.)

"I think the Russians and Germans hate one another more than they do us. I think their hatred of each other has a personal spite, as one hates one's own wife; whereas they hate us as they hate the devil." (Persia, 1899.)

In 1907 Roosevelt chimes in: "Unless freedom shows itself compatible with military strength, it will ultimately have to go to the wall. I abhor and despise the pseudo-humanitarianism which treats advance in civilization as implying a weakening of the fighting spirit."

From Sweden in 1909 Spring Rice writes:

"He who has the sword can do what he likes, and the man with the pen has to go under."

"The sanction of treaties and written promises is force, and nothing but force."

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

"Here is all the world talking of war between England and Germany—except in England. And yet, 'if we fall, the fall is final. We are not like Russia or China; we are a Parthenon, not a pyramid.' "

"At present there is a reign of terror almost like that under Napoleon, but only among those who know the real situation. However, we must behave in the way natural to us."

"The English line is a sort of stolid honesty, a little bit inclining to the stupid. When we try to be clever it doesn't come off: it is like a dog standing on its hind legs."

Did he find things better in America, the chief sphere of his labours? He did not. An Englishman can hardly trust himself to speak of the black-hearted malignity of the American Irish, but Spring Rice, who was of Irish descent, has a great deal to say about it:

"An Irishman would refuse to go to heaven if St. Peter were an Englishman."

"Nothing we could do would conciliate the Irish: they have blood in their eyes when they look our way."

And he gives the reason why the Irish, who are in a small minority, dominate American politics. "There is an Irish vote, but there is no English vote."

In other words, a comparatively small group, pursuing a purely European vendetta without regard to the interests of their adopted country, may hold the balance at the polls, while the Englishman who is content to be a good American if he

INTERNATIONAL HATRED

goes to America, is politically powerless. But this is not all.

"The native American is always ready to hear an attack upon England. This country is afraid of Germany, but the impression prevails that Great Britain would never resent any injury from the United States, and, therefore, any injury could safely be done her."

"Congress will be hostile, because they believe that hostility to England entails no danger. They will be friendly to Germany, because they know that German resentment will entail serious consequences."

What a diabolical world it seems to be, the world in which diplomats live! Hatred everywhere, and deep-laid plots to ruin their neighbours. And how unreal, from one point of view, it all is! For who are the objects of all this hatred? Not individual foreigners, whom we tend to like when we meet them. Englishmen and Germans are like brothers when they mix with each other. The enemy is an abstraction, a bogey man, who does not exist at all.

And yet, from another point of view, how hideously real it is! It is the pacifists, the Christians, who have their heads in the clouds; real international politics is the hell upon earth which the diplomats honestly try not to let loose.

Spring Rice was undoubtedly inclined to see the dark side. After all, the various Continental coalitions against England just failed to materialize;

the Irish just failed to keep America out of the war. Up to the present, the one nation which, in face of hatred and insult, has tried, in a blundering way, to be a decent neighbour, has just escaped destruction. We have just avoided the knock-out blow from which Spring Rice says we should never recover.

It is fortunate that I am at the end of my space; for I really have nothing to say except, Heaven help us all if the world is always to be governed in this way. Rational quarrels can be composed; but these impersonal hatreds are infra-human and infra-rational. What can anyone do to stop them?

IV

OUR CHARACTER ABROAD

THE University of Berlin is fortunate in its professor of English. Dr. Dibelius has a really astonishing knowledge of our institutions and literature, and his opinions about our national character, though disputable at some points, are acute and generous. His book is probably the best that has been written about England, certainly better than my own book on the same subject, for my knowledge is far less extensive.

The mistakes are very few. Perhaps the worst is where he says (p. 348 of the English edition—an admirable translation by Mary Hamilton, M.P.) that “it is quite common to find one vicar drawing the stipends of several livings, whose care he devolves on to wretchedly underpaid curates.” Pluralism in the Church of England has long ceased to exist, and young curates are no longer wretchedly paid; vicars often are. It is also out of date to describe the owners of agricultural land as living “on magnificent estates in the enjoyment of princely revenues.”

But I am not reviewing the book. It is the general point of view—that of a very intelligent and well-informed foreigner—which is worth considering.

The Germans, it seems to me, have taken the

almost inevitable result of the war in an unduly chastened spirit. An Englishman who visited Germany in the early years of the century was probably told, with engaging candour, that Great Britain was degenerate, and that before very long her great empire would be appropriated by a more virile nation. Now, after a struggle in which Germany showed herself even more formidable than her neighbours had supposed, we find Dr. Dibelius ending his book with the words, "it would be a loss to the world if there were no powerful England, but it would be a lasting detriment to the world, inclusive of England, if ever England were to become all-powerful."

No doubt it would: but what Englishman ever dreams of such a possibility? The question for us is whether the extraordinary and glorious historical episode of the British Empire is not approaching its end. We have lost Ireland and Egypt: our position in India is shaken; our Dominions are, except in name, independent republics in alliance with us; they claim the rights to shut out our exports and emigrants. It is no longer an Empire in any sense in which the word has ever been used before.

Dr. Dibelius, like most Continental publicists, thinks that in politics we are diabolically clever and unscrupulous. We "use our elbows without scruple," but usually get other nations to fight our battles. "Practically every war between 1700 and

1818 has ended in a victory for Britain, which in most cases was not the Power which had done most of the fighting." Whenever another nation has threatened to beat us in fair competition—Spain, Holland, France, and Germany in succession—we have bided our time, and with more than Machiavellian astuteness have started a moral crusade against them and struck them down.

This opinion, which is widely held on the Continent, is the very opposite of what we think of ourselves. Not only the man in the street but all the British statesmen and diplomatists whom I have known or whose books I have read quite sincerely believe that our diplomacy is, by comparison with that of most other nations, straightforward, simple, and unaggressive.

Russia, we think, was always intriguing for fresh annexations, and lied without scruple; Germany laid far-sighted plans, but was too brutal and did not understand the psychology of other nations; France is supreme in all the arts of diplomacy, and her aims are purely self-regarding. Britain, with her honesty and good intentions, is unequally matched against such clever rascals!

What is the truth? Probably it lies somewhere between the two extremes. The French seem to me really to possess the qualities which are ascribed to us. If the truth is ever told about the events which led up to the Great War, I believe it will be found that the silent ambassador, M. Paul Cam-

bon, had more than anyone else to do with so entangling us with France that we could not escape a decision which saved France from destruction but which could only end in enormous injury to ourselves.

However this may be, we have to consider how we have got such a bad character abroad.

Dr. Dibelius, who is most anxious to find the exact truth, says that "the English nation is one of the sanest of nations." Spiritually, we are "a healthy people." "Throughout the British Isles there prevails a robust, masculine, and sound morality." "It is no mean achievement to have made self-control the instinct of a whole nation, which only rarely yields to volcanic outbursts of primitive strength." Thus we have given the world a type of character which is everywhere respected, and which, our author says, is on the whole the highest yet attained. We have even planted all over the world our parliamentary institutions, which are workable by Anglo-Saxons, but by no other people in the world.

It is this mixture of sane ambition with idealism which, according to Dr. Dibelius, is the secret of our success. We know instinctively what can be done and what cannot. We have steadily refused to annex a square foot on the mainland of Europe. The Englishman cuts his losses with the coolness of a sagacious merchant. "When France was lost in the fifteenth century, he let it be; when North

America slipped out of his hands, he reconciled himself to the inevitable; after winning the World War, he capitulated to a handful of Irish rebels."

On the Continent, the military code of honour would have opposed such surrenders; but, Dr. Dibelius thinks, there are no sectional codes of ethics—one for the soldier, one for the merchant, one for the scholar—in England; we have only one standard, that of the gentleman.

All this is probably true. But it does not entirely explain why no coalitions have been made against Britain. Attempts have been made again and again. The German biographer of Bülow admits that his policy was to unite Europe against England. These attempts have often nearly succeeded, but not quite, and I think the reason is plain.

Even America came to the rescue when there seemed to be a danger that Germany would wrest the trident from the hands of Britannia. We are, after all, reasonably comfortable neighbours. Our army has never been a menace to any Continental country, and we have not used our fleet to injure the trade of other nations.

Dr. Dibelius is very clever in describing other parts of our complex make-up—our maudlin sentimentality, our cranky religions, and our herd morality. I cannot refrain from quoting his sketch of American civilization. "America is England multiplied, magnified, raised to the *n*th degree. English capitalism reappears in the worship of the

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

almighty dollar, English pride of race in the lynching of negroes, reverence for women in the domination of the female, the self-possession of the English child in the indiscipline of the young, cant in an immovable belief that America can do no wrong, English humanitarianism in philanthropy on an unthinkably large scale."

We are saved from these exaggerations, he thinks, by our aristocratic tradition, which in fact is no longer so strong as he supposes, but which does exert a civilizing influence.

V

“A PLAGUE O’ BOTH YOUR HOUSES”

MERCUTIO, in *Romeo and Juliet*, was not thinking of the Houses of Parliament when he said “A plague o’ both your houses.” He was giving vent to pardonable irritation, for he had just had a knife stuck into him. But his imprecation admirably suits the feelings of the British nation at the present time.

Mr. Snowden is whetting his knife. Of that there can be no doubt. Individually, he is believed to be a dour Yorkshireman, with leanings to Gladstonian Liberalism and sound finance. But, as a Scotch preacher said, “The Almighty is compelled to do many things in his offeelial capacity which he would scorn to do as a private individual.” The tail has wagged the dog. The Government is committed to raise a vast sum by taxation for the worst of all purposes, the pauperization of the electorate.

General Smuts has estimated the amount of these doles since the war at 700 million pounds. There has been nothing at all like it in any other country. In Sweden the Socialists have abolished the dole—no other party could have done it—and have thus saved their country from dry-rot. But our politicians

seem bent upon turning the people of England, who are still as fine a race as any on earth if they are left alone, into a swarm of parasites, good for nothing except to hang on and suck.

Meanwhile, capital is running to earth. The Government lawyers will probably dig most of it out, for the harassed solicitors cannot do much for their clients. "We should all make our fortunes," I have heard one of them say, "if we could save our clients from ruin." There used to be a constitutional principle, "No taxation without representation." To deprive a class of all effective representation and then plunder it for the exclusive benefit of another class would in former days have been held to dissolve all ties of moral obligation between the victims and the spoilers.

Does anyone now want to read the Parliamentary debates? None of our institutions has lost credit and prestige so rapidly as the House of Commons. I can remember when every paterfamilias read the debates through religiously every morning, and when a member of Parliament was treated with the utmost deference as an oracle of wisdom on every subject. Now, the whole machinery of legislation is regarded by most people as a most expensive nuisance.

Mercutio invoked a plague on "both your Houses." But why should we curse the House of Lords? The House of Lords is the most representative of all our assemblies. It represents the

“A PLAGUE O’ BOTH YOUR HOUSES”

caste of Vere de Vere and their American wives; it represents trade and company-promoting; it represents the Church and the Liquor Trade; it represents the daily and weekly newspapers; it represents honest poverty. What is there which it does not represent? But it is a mere shadow of its former self. Lord Birkenhead must be getting tired of potting two or three sitting rabbits on the front bench.

As for the House of Commons, it does not seem to matter very much which party is in power. I believe it is medically correct to say that the heart of this country beats in the left centre. But Liberalism, in spite of the unctuous rectitude with which it is clothed as with a garment, never sees far in front of its nose. The history of moderate reform is always the same. What Martin Luther believed in, as Mr. Lippmann says, was Protestantism for good Catholics. He quite approved of killing Anabaptists, who were consistent Protestants. Similarly, the Liberals believed in democracy for good aristocrats. At present they occupy a not too dignified position between two stools, since they have neither the courage nor the wits to come forward as the champions of the downtrodden middle class. If they did this they would wipe out the Conservative Party, which is tarred with Socialism.

It does not matter very much which party is in power. But on the whole, if we want a mild revolu-

tion, it is better to put the Tories in. They will be so eager to steal the clothes of the other side while they are bathing that they are likely to do more mischief than the Socialists could have done in the same time.

On the other hand, if we want a spirited foreign policy, it is better to put the Radicals in power. Their instinct, of course, is to side with their country's enemies, right or wrong. Our countrymen, they hold, differ from other misguided rascals in never being in the right even by accident. But, since they can count upon a patriotic Opposition, and since their own supporters will vote for them whatever they do, the path of least resistance is to stand up, in moderation, for the rights of Great Britain. It is certain that in recent years it is the Tories who have carried the social reforms, most of them mischievous, and it is the Radicals who have made the wars, most of them unnecessary.

Between the two the miserable taxpayer, whose only wish is to be left alone to do his work and provide for his family, is skinned alive. The political game may be great fun for the politicians, but it is ruin to him. He does not care what sauce he is cooked with; he does not want to be cooked at all. But that, it appears, is far too much to expect. Things seem just now to be tending towards a Gilbertian situation, in which the Government, hoping for a larger majority, are trying to go out, while the Opposition are determined to keep them

"A PLAGUE O' BOTH YOUR HOUSES"

in, giving them plenty of rope to hang themselves with. It is all very funny, but the taxpayer cannot be expected to see the joke.

The worst of it is that all this grumbling leads to nothing. When James Duke of York, afterwards James the Second, remonstrated with his brother Charles for not taking more care of his sacred person, the Merry Monarch replied, "They will never kill me, James, to make you King." It is the same with us. We are not going to kill (even politically) our precious politicians to put our necks under a Mussolini or a Stalin. We may be driven from a mansion to a villa and from a villa to a bungalow, but we are not dosed with castor-oil and banished to the Isle of Sark, or shot without trial by the Ogpu.

The best plan, of course, would be for the King to dissolve Parliament and govern us himself for eleven years, like Charles I. The country, which only needs rest from incessant phlebotomy, would flourish like a green bay-tree, and we should all be happy except the parasites of the Government; but I fear the statue of Oliver Cromwell in Palace Yard looks rather too menacing. It is very ridiculous that we cannot devise a decent system of Government. But I suppose we shall have to stick to the grandmother of Parliaments—our own prize invention, of which we used to be so proud.

The one consolation is that there is notoriously no gratitude in politics. The man who fell among

thieves was properly grateful to the good Samaritan for setting him on his own beast and paying his hotel bill. He would have had less reason to be grateful to the modern type of Samaritan, who runs after the Priest and Levite and takes the horse of one and the purse of the other and calls it "social service." At any rate, nobody is grateful to politicians. And so it pays best to make promises and not to fulfil them. The goose that lays the golden eggs is thus kept alive, to be killed another day, and the poor bird must say, "For this relief much thanks."

Of course, our politicians are charming people when you meet them. There is nothing personal in these bleatings of a shorn sheep who expects soon to be flayed. "It is the part of a good shepherd to shear his sheep, not to flay them," says the old Latin grammar. But I agree with Lecky that the happiest time to live in England was between the first and second Reform Bills, between 1832 and 1867. Then one might have been as jolly as Lord Macaulay, who contemplated the world as made by the Whigs, and, behold, it was very good.

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

FROM MY PRIVATE NOTEBOOK

MR. PEARSALL SMITH has given us in his *Treasury of English Aphorisms* a feast of good things, which I hope many will enjoy. It is true that a long series of "Laconics," as they have been called from the proverbial terseness of the Lacedaemonians, begins to cloy after a time.

We should not try to read a book like this all at once. But in these days, when people want even their religion in tabloid form, the aphorism ought to be as popular as it was in the days before books. It is an old method of teaching, as we see in the Wisdom Books of the Bible and in the proverbial philosophy of the Chinese.

The French have carried the art to great perfection; but I agree with Mr. Pearsall Smith that our own literature contains a wealth of epigrams which, if less perfect in form than the French, cut deeper as stimulants to thought. La Rochefoucauld is too often merely cynical and smart; he makes us blush for our own weaknesses, but there is in him none of the deep and genial wisdom of Samuel Johnson, who was well aware that most wise sayings need an opposite one, equally wise, to balance it. He often supplies both.

The best aphorisms are never mere paradoxes.

Paradox is about the cheapest and most wearisome form of wit. The good aphorism is an essay or sermon in miniature, and the beauty of it is that it leaves us to think out the essay or sermon for ourselves. Often, however, the aphorist wishes us to laugh at a mischievous half-truth, as when Johnson, an excellent husband, argues that a man must pay his wife's bills, "for he that will keep a monkey, 'tis meet he should pay for the glasses she breaks."

Mr. Pearsall Smith gives us, quite parenthetically, one of his own, which for its deadly truth is worthy of La Rochefoucauld: "That one should practise what he preaches is generally agreed; but anyone who has the indiscretion to *preach what both he and his hearers practise* must always incur the gravest moral reprobation."

I will venture to print some of my own aphorisms, which have hitherto reposed in a very private notebook.

SOCIAL

(1) The rudest of all possible greetings is, "You don't know me, Mr. So-and-So." A conversation never recovers from this opening.

(2) When a man intervenes with personal abuse and insult in a courteous discussion of some matter of public interest, a gentleman cannot answer without degrading himself to his level. The cad,

FROM MY PRIVATE NOTEBOOK

like a drunken street-walker, must be left in possession of the field.

(3) Try to arrange your life in such a way that you can afford to be disinterested. It is the most expensive of all luxuries, and the best worth having.

(4) A common blunder is to spend ourselves on things which are not worthless, but which are not worth the time they take.

(5) Personalize your sympathies; depersonalize your antipathies.

(6) Individual experience is always one-eyed. It takes more than one man to see anything in focus.

(7) The men who have made history have generally been linked to their own age by some blot, flaw, or absurdity in their own minds or characters.

(8) Science is cruel only to be kind; sentimental humanitarianism is kind only to be cruel.

(9) Never put a man entirely in the wrong, if you want to be his friend afterwards.

(10) The vulgar mind always mistakes the exceptional for the important.

RELIGIOUS

(11) He who will live for others shall have great troubles, but they shall seem to him small. He who will live for himself shall have small troubles, but they shall seem to him great.

(12) The religious temper does not allow criticism

of the moulds in which its faith is preserved. Hence the extraordinary vitality of religious symbols.

(13) Religious judgments are determined by man's experience of the relation between value and reality. Religious faith is a firm conviction that the highest value must, in the nature of things, persist and prevail. Differences depend partly on different valuations, partly on education, and partly on personal experience.

(14) In the life of reason, impersonal relations take the place of personal; in religion, the personal tries to embrace even the impersonal.

(15) It is not so much scientific results which cause the quarrel between religion and science, as the scientific habit of mind.

(16) From the purely scientific and from the purely religious point of view, there are no miracles. Miracle requires two gods, one to "suspend" the laws of the other.

(17) The opposite of natural religion is not revealed, but artificial religion.

(18) When the religious mind tries to understand itself, and still more when it tries to explain itself, it must hold up a mirror and describe what it sees there. What it describes is an inverted image.

(19) Many people believe that they are attracted by God, or by Nature, when they are only repelled by man.

(20) Fear and Hope represent the characteristic Jewish attitude; Faith and Love the Christian.

FROM MY PRIVATE NOTEBOOK

(21) Christianity does not offer itself as an immediate or direct cure for the evils of the world, nor as an indirect and final cure for all that the natural man regards as evil. It offers a final cure for real evils, and a direct cure for a wrong attitude towards seeming evils.

(22) Materialistic dogmatism is the clerical form of dogmatic materialism.

(23) A man's personal religion is that which corrects the obliquity of his own spiritual vision. A prophet's religion is that which corrects the obliquity of his generation's spiritual vision. We like to stone the prophets, because we have got used to our own spectacles.

(24) I sometimes think that there can be no pain in hell, any more than in a mortified limb. Where there is suffering, there may be hope.

(25) The one thing that a dreamer never does is to dream that he is dreaming.

(26) Theology is spoilt by rhetoric, not by philosophy.

(27) Ebb and flow in the spiritual life, as in the sea, are necessary, and are a sign of life, not of death.

(28) Many religious people shut themselves in their systems like a snail in his shell, because they are naked.

PHILOSOPHICAL

(29) Consciousness is a phase of mental life which arises in connection with the formation of new

habits. When a habit is formed, consciousness only interferes to spoil our performance of it.

(30) We need not set self-sacrifice against self-realization; for the self that one sacrifices is never the same as the self that one realizes.

(31) Monism is the philosophy of the intellect, dualism of the moral consciousness, pluralism of the aesthetic sense.

(32) Pessimism contains its own refutation; it believes in an ideal standard by which the world is judged to be evil.

(33) The past is not dead—I have travelled out of sight of it, that is all. To-morrow is new to me, not to God.

(34) The moral order seems to us to be as prodigal in its waste of values as the physical order in its waste of energy.

(35) What are the qualifications of an historian? A scientific conscience; a poetical imagination; a prophetic soul.

(36) The philosopher who is not something of an ascetic is a moral dilettante or a self-deceiver.

(37) "Know thyself" is really the sum of wisdom; for he who knows himself knows also God.

PRANKS OF THE IMAGINATION

IN early Victorian days a clergyman who had a smattering of science gave a lecture in a Yorkshire village on the properties of oxygen, illustrated by demonstrations. Some twenty years after, when he revisited the same village, he was surprised, and no doubt gratified, to find that his lecture was still a topic of animated conversation. "Well, sir," said one of the villagers, "you wouldn't expect us to forget that lecture, when you made an 'are and 'ounds come out of a glass bottle and run round the room." "Hare and hounds!" said the astonished lecturer, "why, I was talking about the air—the air we breathe." "I assure you, sir, there are a dozen people in the parish who can swear they saw the 'are run round the room. Some of them saw the 'ounds, others didn't."

This is the way that "miracles" happen. They do not take long to grow; and the more people there are who are present, the surer they will be that they saw the miracle. A critic two thousand years hence would never hit upon the true explanation—that Yorkshire rustics do not sound the letter *h*.

When the spectators are excited, they will be very sure indeed that they saw what they did not see. Mr. E. L. Clarke, an American writer from

whom I shall borrow one other story, writes: "In 1921, after the Ohio-Illinois football game, thousands of spectators denounced the blindness of the officials, declaring that in a decisive forward pass the ball had touched the ground. The unprejudiced testimony of the motion picture showed that the ball had not touched the ground, and that the observation of the thousands was inaccurate." The spectators at football and cricket are too far away to observe accurately. The critic in the pavilion infers that a batsman was, or was not, l.b.w., from the way he plays at the ball. He cannot possibly see, though he thinks he saw. In the law-courts precise evidence is often given which is certainly created by the imagination.

A friend of mine, a prominent but not credulous member of the Psychical Research Society, went to investigate a very circumstantial ghost story at a country house. The ghost appeared at the end of a passage and walked slowly down it. My friend took with him two detectives, and they stationed themselves at the farther end of the passage. Presently the ghost appeared, and approached them slowly. The two detectives fled howling. My friend repressed a strong inclination to do the same, and charged along the passage, head down. There was no ghost. The moon was shining on a new linoleum flooring. But the evidence of two detectives and a distinguished man of letters would be enough to hang anybody.

PRANKS OF THE IMAGINATION

I believe the whole art of a conjurer consists in appealing to this faculty of hallucination. I have heard that in the most famous of all Indian tricks, in which a tree grows out of a pot, and a boy climbs up it, followed by a man with a knife, a surreptitious photograph revealed that the man and boy never moved from their position beside the pot..

What is the real explanation of the extraordinary blunder of Admiral Rojestvensky in October 1904, when the Russian fleet opened fire upon the Hull fishing-boats, killing two men? The Russians declared that they saw Japanese torpedo-boats. Perhaps the officers were drunk, and perhaps a sailor in that condition sees torpedo-boats where a landsman would see snakes or rats. It was not a demonstration against England, for the Russians had previously fired upon Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and German boats. It is certain that there were no Japanese torpedo-boats in European waters, and that, but for the coolness of Lord Salisbury, this hallucination would have led to war between the two countries.

When I was young, house-parties used to play a game called Russian scandal—why Russian I do not know. A story was whispered by one to another, and emerged from the last teller in a very different condition from its original shape. Mr. Clarke (his book is called *The Art of Straight Thinking*, published by Appleton) gives a perfect example of the growth

of a legend during the war. It is, perhaps, hardly a fair specimen of honest self-deception, since many war-propagandists on both sides took out a plenary dispensation for patriotic lying.

Kölnische Zeitung (Germany)—“When the fall of Antwerp was known, the church bells were rung” (meaning in Germany).

Matin (Paris)—“According to the *Cologne Zeitung*, the clergy of Antwerp were compelled to ring the church bells when the fortress was taken.”

The [Jupiter] (London)—“According to what the *Matin* has heard from Cologne, the Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been driven away from their places.”

Corriere della Sera (Italy)—“According to what the [*Jupiter*] has heard from Cologne via Paris, the unfortunate Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been sentenced to hard labour.”

Matin (Paris)—“According to information to the *Corriere della Sera* from Cologne via London, it is confirmed that the barbaric conquerors of Antwerp punished the unfortunate Belgian priests for their heroic refusal to ring the church bells by hanging them as living clappers to the bells with their heads down.”

The Germans were pretty good at this sort of thing. I have seen (I wish I had been able to secure a copy) a very cleverly faked photograph of the

ruins of St. Paul's Cathedral after a Zeppelin raid, which appeared in German newspapers.

The canard about the Russian troops who were seen by many persons passing through England on their way to France in the autumn of 1914 is a very good example of collective hallucination. It would make a very interesting story, but I have never been able to find out how it started, nor whether (as I suspect) our Government encouraged it. It deceived the clever German spy who was executed in the Tower in the early months of the war. The "Angels of Mons" would probably have been generally credited in an age when angels had more actuality than they have now. Many Romans were no doubt ready to swear, quite honestly, that they had seen "the Great Twin Brethren," Castor and Pollux, fighting on their side at the Battle of Lake Regillus.

Those who have collected such stories are naturally very slow to credit supernatural occurrences, no matter how well they are attested. There is hardly any limit to the power of self-deception. Anecdotes grow, not only in passing from mouth to mouth, but in the mind of the narrator. People enjoy telling them, and gradually come to believe that they have seen them themselves, for a first-hand narrative is much more interesting than something which "Mr. Smith told me happened to a friend of his." Politeness forbids the expression of total incredulity, which might provoke the

awkward question, "Do you take me for a fool or a liar?" The truthful answer, "A little of both," would not be conciliatory.

How much of history is *une fable convenue* we shall never know, unless Marconi or someone else discovers how to pick up past events from the waves of the ether which may still echo them. There are a few things of which we may be certain, but they are mostly things which do not matter. The Psalmist who said in his haste, "All men are liars," never formally retracted that sweeping judgment. Samuel Butler says: "The Deity cannot alter the past, but historians can and do; perhaps that is why He allows them to exist." We can only hope that too many innocent men have not been hanged through the fertile imagination of witnesses. Truth, philosophers have said, lives at the bottom of a well. But Thales, the founder of Greek philosophy, fell down a well while star-gazing, and did not find her there.

III

“IF —”

PUTTING aside, for the purposes of this article, the question of whether all events are overruled, as the phrase is, by Divine Providence, how much importance should be ascribed to pure chance in human affairs?

There is a school of historians who assume that everything that happens was inevitable. From their vantage-ground of knowing the answer to the riddles they scold the statesmen and thinkers who did not see what was coming, and who, in consequence, did not float with the stream, a feat which any dead dog can accomplish, or lick the hand of the stronger, a service which any live dog is eager to render. History is a snob; it always sides with the gods against Cato, and praises those who put their money on the winning horse.

But there have been scholars who have been utter disbelievers in the inevitable. Among these was the late Professor Bury of Cambridge, the historian of the later Roman Empire. He drew out his theory in an article called “Cleopatra’s Nose.” If the nose of the famous Queen of Egypt had been an inch longer or shorter, she would presumably not have captivated Mark Antony, and then would the history of the world have been different? If

Mohammed had been killed in one of his early battles, would a new conquering creed have swept over a great part of Asia, Europe, and North Africa?

It seems to me that Bury was right. Pure chance has had a great deal to do with the course of events; few great movements have been inevitable. It would be a fascinating game for competent students of history to work out the results which would have followed if certain accidents had or had not occurred.

For instance, if St. Paul had been caught and killed when his friends let him down in a basket from the wall of Damascus, should we now be Christians? At the time of his conversion there seemed to be a possibility that the Jewish Church—a mere sect within Judaism—might have developed, under James the Lord's brother, into a kind of Khalifate in the family of the founder. Such a sect could never have conquered the Greek and Roman world. Would it even have been able to keep alive the memory of Jesus and His teachings?

To come to more modern times. It was the desire for cheap pepper and cloves that sent Columbus to look for the East Indies in the wrong direction. Brazil is Portuguese because a Portuguese captain who was trying to round the Cape of Good Hope was driven so far out of his course that he unexpectedly struck the projecting elbow of South America.

If Henry VIII's elder brother had lived, or if Henry's first Kate had borne him sons, what sort of Reformation should we have had? If the capable

Tudors had lived on through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, instead of the incompetent Stuarts, and half-foreign Georges, would England have become an absolute monarchy, like France under Louis XIV?

If George III had had the political sagacity of Queen Victoria, should we have lost America? And, if not, would the political connection between the two countries have been terminated in the twentieth century by a glorious war of independence waged by Great Britain?

If Napoleon had not detached Grouchy and his division from his main army, he might have won the battle of Waterloo, and then what would have happened? This is the subject of a brilliant essay written in 1907 by Professor Trevelyan, who has just received the Order of Merit. He thinks that Napoleon would have surprised the world by making peace and keeping it. But I do not feel quite sure that he would have had the option. Wellington, if he was the general I take him for, had probably kept open a line of retreat to the coast, and would have rescued the remnant of his army. The Continental Powers were collecting huge forces, which the victorious French would have had to meet. Many of the French were tired of war, and Napoleon himself was no longer the man he had been. In fact, I doubt if Waterloo should be ranked among the decisive battles of the world.

Many Anglicans have speculated what would

have happened to the Church of England if Mrs. Manning had not died young. If she had lived, the future Cardinal, the most ambitious and crafty of ecclesiastics, would have had to remain in the Church of his baptism. He was one of those men whom nobody can keep back, and he would probably have become Archbishop of Canterbury. The results for the Church of England would most likely have been unfortunate.

If either William II or Nicholas II had been a wise, far-seeing man, the Great War would not have broken out, and we should still be living in the now half-forgotten world which that calamity brought to an end.

But of all the "Ifs" of history, none offers a more exciting field for speculation than the death of Alexander the Great at the age of thirty-two. He died at Babylon of fever, perhaps of typhoid. Some invisible microbe can claim the credit of altering the whole course of history for thousands of years. For Alexander, as we all learned at school, conquered the whole world, from the Adriatic to the Indus, and was dreaming of new military exploits when his last illness overtook him. It is quite certain that nowhere in the world was there any army which could have stood against him. And yet he was not a mere raider, like Sennacherib or Timour. He would not have marched across India to the mouth of the Ganges, nor led an expedition into Russia. He would have turned to the West,

where the Sicilian Greeks needed help against Carthage, and the Italian Greeks against Rome. I guess that he would have made Byzantium (Constantinople) his capital, and that while organizing the new centre of his empire he would have received an appeal from the Sicilians, and would have sent his admiral to destroy the Carthaginian fleet.

This, however, would have been only the beginning. His uncle, Alexander of Epirus, had taunted him with invading the women's quarters in Asia instead of the men's in Italy. Before very long he would have replied to this taunt. He would have landed a great army in the heel of Italy. Now, at this time the Romans were at death-grips with a powerful Italian nation, the Samnites. Cannot we picture the combined forces of Alexander and the Samnites falling upon Rome, storming and sacking it, and wiping it off the map? It would have happened but for that microbe.

And what a strange world, with no Roman empire, no Roman law, no Latin language, and no Roman Church!

If we think of our own lives—putting aside that trust in Providence of which I spoke in my retrospect of my own life—what a chapter of accidents they seem to have been! What hair-breadth escapes from marrying the wrong girl, from putting our money in the wrong company, from having our valuable lives cut short!

During the Boer war a bullet missed me by about two inches. I was not relieving Ladysmith; I was travelling peacefully between London and Oxford when some enthusiastic patriot, practising at the butts with more zeal than discretion, sent a projectile through the window of my railway carriage.

And how did we come to marry the lady who, let us hope, has brought the peace of Heaven into our lives? "Juxtaposition in short, and what is juxtaposition?" as the poet Clough says.

Sometimes, of course, these "ifs" are sad enough. "If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." If hell is paved with good intentions, purgatory seethes with the thought of lost opportunities. What an example we might draw from recent politics! If the Conservative Party, returned to power with a huge majority, had had enterprising leaders with a definite policy, how different the state of the country would be now! It looks to me as if during those years Conservatism threw away its last chance.

It is no wonder that many peoples have made Fortune a goddess. She has many shamefaced but sincere votaries even now in all parts of the world. The Epicureans thought that a rational world emerged from a fortuitous concourse of atoms. We pretend to think that out of a fortuitous concourse of voters will emerge political wisdom.

IV

CRICKET, PAST AND PRESENT

A QUEER subject for the Dean of St. Paul's to write about? Not so very queer. I am an undistinguished member of a cricketing family, and among the treasures of my library are three numbers of *Lilly-white's Guide to Cricketers*, for the years 1854, 1857, and 1861, in which the exploits of my father and one of my uncles in the Oxford Eleven are recorded.

I could once have passed a very creditable examination in these books, which are now so scarce that my copies may possibly be the only ones extant. This week, when the public is obviously much more interested in Test Match prospects than in the other dreary record set up by the unemployed, curiosity led me to take down the little bound volume containing "full directions for playing the noble and manly game of cricket, with remarks upon all Gentlemen and Professionals of note."

My father, in 1853, did not play against Cambridge in a top-hat, but ten years earlier he probably would have done so. These beavers, which were always worn in the cricket field, were of such massive construction that a penalty of five runs had to be imposed for "ball stopped with hat." The idea of an out-fielder in a Test Match scooping

up the ball in his hat and then throwing it in is rather amusing.

We are told of one famous professional bowler that he "much preferred shooters to rising balls"! Could anyone bowl a shooter at will? If a man was bowled by a shooter now, he would complain of the groundsman. But there was a time when shooters at Lord's were so common that the Eton and Harrow cricket-coaches used to bowl downhill, to accustom the boys to stop them.

Another problem about the old bowlers has always puzzled me. One of these "Guides to Cricketers" contains an obituary notice, in mixed prose and *worse*, of the famous Kentish cricketer, Alfred Mynn. It seems that Mynn bowled so fast that "even Felix, that great master of cricket, could seldom hit his bowling in front of the wicket." The same is recorded of other fast bowlers eighty or a hundred years ago, who never bowled without two longstops, one behind the other.

How did these giants of the past get on such a terrific pace? They were not allowed to lift their arm above the shoulder, and they were forbidden, as bowlers are now, to throw or jerk. I have never heard an answer to this question, which seems to me as interesting as the amazing records of medieval archery.

The game has changed very little in seventy years. The chief difference is in the much lower scores when Queen Victoria was young. In 1861

the best average was 29·6 by R. Carpenter, the Cambridge professional. He and Hayward, also of Cambridge, with Richard Daft of Nottingham, were considered the best bats of their day. (Why, by the way, has Cambridgeshire, once the champion county, dropped so completely out of the front rank?)

The bowling averages in 1861, oddly enough, were not much better than the best to-day; Willsher comes out best with 11·59, other leading bowlers with 12 to 14. The Graces are only just visible above the horizon in the person of E. M. Grace, who "has scored over one hundred runs on several occasions last season, and would be a good man for Gentlemen *v.* Players." In 1853 the batting averages are a trifle lower, and in those days amateur batsmen more than held their own.

Touring elevens of professionals against "Twenty-two of — and District" were then a great institution, and no doubt had an educational value. I remember seeing one such match in Yorkshire. Readers of *Punch* will remember the delightful picture of "The Pride of the Village" returning, much bandaged, after a "hover from Jackson," and describing how the first ball took him on the hand, the second on the knee, the third was in his eye, and the fourth bowled him out. "Jolly game!" says Mr. Punch.

It is possible to argue that any game is partly spoilt when it is played too perfectly or under too

perfect conditions. I have heard good players say that they prefer second-class cricket for this reason, and championship form at billiards or croquet is dull to watch. I think there can be no doubt that the keeping of averages is a pestilent custom, and it is irritating to an old-fashioned spectator to hear a very poor stroke applauded because "So-and-so has got his thousand runs this season."

Personally, I think the public will soon be tired of watching an innings of four hundred with only three men out. Something ought to be done to give the bowler a fair chance, or the crowds will drop off, as they have already begun to do at the University match. As played at present, first-class cricket is less exciting to watch than football or Wimbledon tennis, and I think it tends to become less interesting each year.

The etiquette of the game has broken down very much since I can first remember. To pull a straight ball to leg was considered not only poor cricket, but it showed a culpable want of consideration for the feelings of the bowler. Growls of "Village green!" rewarded a successful stroke of this kind, and an aspirant to the Eton Eleven would not have dared to try it when R. A. H. Mitchell was looking on.

Still more strongly would the present practice of standing in front of the wicket have been condemned as unsportsmanlike. It was commonly said, "If the ball beats the bat, it deserves to get a wicket." The legs were not intended to be used as

a second line of defence, and to use them so deliberately was comparable to laying a deliberate stymie at golf. Whether the game has been improved by discarding this "gentlemen's agreement" is a matter of opinion. I know that several fine old cricketers greatly regret the change.

I am even doubtful whether playing for a draw was approved of sixty years ago. I think in those days a side was quite content to lose to a better eleven, and regarded a draw as an unsatisfactory finish. But at that time it was not the custom to set statisticians to work to compute "points."

The game is also undoubtedly threatened by the disappearance of the amateur from first-class cricket. No game is in a sound state when it is played only by professionals. And cricket does not make the same universal appeal as football and lawn tennis. In America I saw a game going on at Philadelphia, and was told that it was probably the only game played that day on the American continent. In Australia, as we all know, it flourishes luxuriantly, and South Africa can send over a good team; but on the continent of Europe cricket hardly exists.

The genius of Indians for our national game is a thing we should never have believed if we had not seen it; but cricket does not seem to have taken root in China or Japan. It is as much an English game as baseball is American—a much finer game, I cannot help thinking, than baseball, which seemed to me when I watched a

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

university match in America to be a second-rate game magnificently played. An American would say, probably rightly, that that only showed my ignorance of the finer points of baseball. But I still maintain that cricket is probably the best game yet devised by the wit of man, and, as Milton says, when Providence has a really great idea, He reveals it first to His Englishmen.

GHOSTS, PAST AND PRESENT

IN 1570 Lavater, a Protestant minister at Zürich, published a book on demonology, which two years later was translated into English with the title, *On Ghosts and Spirites Walking by Nyght*. This curious work has just been reprinted by the Oxford Press. The writer is concerned to prove that ghosts are not souls escaped from Purgatory, which was the Romanist view.

Lavater says that though there are many impostures, "spirits do sometimes appear." "They are not souls of dead men, but either good or evil angels, or some secret operations of God." They are usually devils, but they "sometimes tell the truth." It is wrong to talk to them or put any questions to them.

Archbishop Sandys, in 1578, was premature in saying that "the Gospel hath chased away walking spirits." There was never a time when belief in ghosts and witches (the two superstitions are closely allied) was more alive than in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. The witch-trials are a very ugly chapter in the history of the Reformed Churches. James I himself, "the wisest fool in Christendom," wrote a treatise on "Demonology," and reissued it in 1606.

Before the Reformation, ghosts sometimes volunteered the information that they came from Purgatory, as the ghost in *Hamlet* seems to have done. Hamlet could jest with his father's ghost; if the ghost had been a devil (the Protestant view) he would have been afraid to talk to him.

We seldom realize what a nightmare life must have been when these apparitions were believed in. Some old maids look under their beds for a burglar; in the Middle Ages they might have found a devil hiding there.

Did the Christian Church help to cure this disease, or to make it worse? The answer is, Both. The ancient world became far more superstitious in the second century. "The world is ruled by the Black One and his hordes," writes Barnabas. Every place was full of demons, and every village had its demoniacs. Exorcism became an important part of the activities of the Church. It was believed that everyone has a good and an evil angel hovering about him, and trying to control him. But so powerful was the white magic of the Church, that Christians could laugh at the "poor devils," without for a moment ceasing to believe in them.

This tone is common in the Middle Ages. "Were it not for us," says Tertullian, as early as A.D. 200, "who could save you from these hidden foes?" The Church, in fact, did its best to suppress black magic; but as long as demons and apparitions were firmly believed in, the evil could not be cured.

It died out slowly under the influence of rationalism; Luther was a strong believer, John Wesley a belated example of the vitality of the superstition. It is not quite dead yet, as we know; but modern necromancers do not profess to call spirits either from Purgatory or from hell.

It may amuse my readers to hear two ancient ghost stories. It will be seen that the habits of ghosts have not changed much since pagan times. The first is from a letter to the younger Pliny, the same who, as governor of Bithynia, corresponded with the Emperor Trajan about the treatment of Christians.

"I should be very glad to know," he writes to his friend Sura, "whether you think that ghosts have any real existence, or are only created by our terrified imagination. I am induced to believe in them by the following two stories. . . . Secondly, there was at Athens a large and roomy house, which had a deadly reputation. In the silence of the night chains were heard to clank, and the sound came nearer, till the ghost appeared, an old man in the last stage of emaciation, with a long beard and shaggy hair; he rattled the fetters which bound his hands and feet. The inmates could not sleep for fear; they became ill and even died. So the house remained empty, left to the ghost. A notice was put up—'This house to be let or sold.'

"Athenodorus, a philosopher, came to Athens and read the notice; but the low price roused his

suspicious, and on inquiry he learned the truth. But he took the house, and on the first night was sitting at his desk, deep in his literary work. The ghost appeared, and beckoned to him; when he took no notice, the ghost rattled his chains over his head. Then the philosopher took up his lamp and followed the ghost into the courtyard, where he vanished. Next morning he informed the police, and asked them to dig on the spot where the ghost was last seen. They found the bones of a man loaded with chains. The remains were collected and given decent burial, after which there was no more trouble in the house."

The other story dates from the same century, but is from a Greek source. Lucian of Samosata was a Syrian. He is the Voltaire of antiquity, a brilliant mocker and satirist of humbugs of every kind. He has no respect for the Christians, but the pagan gods and the philosophers are the chief objects of his ridicule. His essay on *The Lover of Lies* (Philopseudes) is a collection of supernatural stories, which, of course, he may have invented himself; but they are evidently typical of the ghost stories which were actually believed by his contemporaries.

"While we were talking, two young sons of Eucrates came in from the gymnasium and sat on the sofa beside their father. Eucrates said, 'As I hope to have happiness from these two boys, what I am about to tell you is true. Everyone knows how

I loved my wife, their mother, who is now in heaven. I showed my affection for her by ordering all her ornaments and dresses, which she liked when she was alive, to be burnt with her body. A week after her death I was sitting on this sofa trying to console myself by reading Plato on the immortality of the soul, when my Demaeneta came in and sat beside me just where my younger boy now is.' (The boy, who was pale with fright before, shuddered all over.)

" 'I embraced her and wept; but she stopped me and blamed me because, though I had been very kind to her in other ways, I had not burnt one of her gold slippers. It had fallen down, she said, under the chest; and since we had not been able to find it, we had burnt only one of the pair. While she was speaking our confounded Maltese dog began to bark, and she vanished. But we found the slipper under the chest and burnt it.' "

There are some people who think that there is a substratum of truth in these stories, and that if we could disentangle the actual facts from the mass of hallucination and imposture (which no one denies), we might establish the fact of human survival on a scientific basis. I am entirely of the opposite opinion. I believe in immortality, but I do not think we can form any clear idea of the conditions of existence in the eternal world. The pictures which we make are only helps to the imagination. Some of them are really helpful;

others, like the story of Eucrates, are unworthy and absurd.

I do not think that the kind of evidence which psychical research tries to establish is of the slightest value in the religious sense; it does not and cannot prove anything that the religious mind wants to know. For there is a non-religious belief in survival and a non-religious desire to prove it. In spite of my sympathy with those who have lost those whom they love, I do not think that the nature of things can give them what they ask.

I hope there are not many children like a little girl who was seen surreptitiously burying a sheet of notepaper. It proved to be a letter, "Dear Devil,—Please come and take Aunt Jane.—Yours affectionately, Molly."

VI

PROTECTIVE MIMICRY

THE question is keenly debated among men of science whether Nature shows signs of purposive adaptation to environment. One might suppose that the evidence was conclusive, but it is equally certain that the adaptation is not conscious, and some would say that an unconscious purpose is a contradiction in terms. This objection may be met by believing that the adaptations are willed not by the creatures themselves but by a personal Creator. But it is doubtful whether this hypothesis gives quite so much support to theism as might appear at first sight. For many of the adaptations are devices to enable the creatures to outwit each other; their object is either to eat or to escape being eaten.

Some of these tricks are so ingenious and so funny as to give countenance to the notion, which serious-minded persons have never been willing to accept, that the Creator has a keen sense of humour and enjoys a joke. This is the most obvious way of accounting for the existence of many human beings, and is it profane to suppose that the Maker of the mandrill, the giraffe, the hippopotamus, and the toad (which always reminded my friend Arthur Benson of a priest in a cope) may smile at His

works? And what of the nasty practical joke played by the skunk, the threat of which makes any dog "too proud to fight," like President Wilson?

One insect protects itself by looking like a stick, another by copying another insect which has a disagreeable taste; another, which has no sting, camouflages itself with black and yellow stripes to look like a wasp. I have seen in a collection an Indian butterfly which, when it folds its wings, reproduces exactly the wicked little head and cruel eye of a cobra.

But what of protective mimicry among human beings? Can we suppose that it does not play an important part in civilized society? Browning says that the meanest of God's creatures has two sides to his soul, one to face the world with, the other to show a woman when he loves her. Alas! many of the "mean creatures" keep a very ill-natured side to show to the wives of their bosoms and a mere mask to face the world with. Some people are like the moon, of whom a poetic housemaid wrote:

O moon, lovely moon, with thy beautiful face,
Careering throughout the boundaries of space,
Whenever I see thee I think in my mind,
Shall I ever, O ever, behold thy Behind?

In any country which has a real aristocracy, like Great Britain, Spain, Austria, and Hungary, we find that "the class of Vere de Vere" cultivates not only repose of manners but a countenance carefully denuded of all expression.

The aristocrats of all countries recognize each other at a glance by this "Stoic-Epicurean acceptance" of life, and fraternize at once. Count Keyserling has noticed this especially with Englishmen and Austrians. The English gentleman, he complains, hides his thoughts so successfully that he is often mistaken for a fool. It is part of that cult of perfect self-control which is an English ideal, for there is no doubt that the outward expression of the emotions tends to intensify them. I will leave it to the psycho-analysts to say whether the "repression" of them is good or bad for the mental constitution.

We have heard that "a man may smile and smile and be a villain." Does observation confirm this statement? A gallery of portraits of successful swindlers would be interesting. Many of them, I suspect, would be benevolent, fatherly-looking persons, brimming over with the milk of human kindness. Even if they are known to have gone wrong once, they look so like good boys now that it would be too unkind not to trust them. Some ne'er-do-wells have a special gift for beguiling and deceiving women. The Bluebeard of real life is generally found fascinating by the other sex.

On the other hand, there is unquestionably a criminal type—men who are so obviously enemies of society that even if they amended their ways they would have a poor chance of recovering the confidence of their neighbours. "If the prisoner is

not guilty," a judge is reported to have said once, "Providence clearly intended that he should be thought so." Such men have not mastered the secret of protective mimicry, and everyone's hand is against them.

I was once walking in a wood near a hotel in the Highlands of Scotland when I suddenly met the most ruffianly-looking man I have ever seen, "a fellow by the hand of Nature marked, quoted and signed to do some deed of shame." He was not a big man, and I carried a serviceable stick; but I stood aside to let him pass. That evening I heard that he had tried to assault a girl staying in the hotel. He turned out to be an escaped convict, who was duly laid by the heels two days later.

It was said of a great judge of the nineteenth century that nobody could possibly be so wise as Lord Thurlow looked. I have known one or two successful men who looked as wise as stuffed owls but were really only of moderate intelligence. There is always something slightly comic in an assembly of professional men—doctors, lawyers, clergymen, or teachers. One can see their natural features partially moulded into the typical professional type. Those who fail to acquire this stamp are at a disadvantage.

Some great men, however, have wished to look like anything except what they are. Sir Walter Scott liked to fancy himself a scion of a race of border-raiders who wrote novels as a recreation.

A lady who met Robert Browning at dinner inquired of her neighbour, "Who is that too exuberant financier?" I know an excellent critic and man of letters who looks like a prize-fighter got up to attend a race-meeting. Tennyson, on the other hand, looked every inch a poet, and dressed for the part.

But on the whole we all have to protect ourselves by not wearing our hearts upon our sleeves. It is good advice to keep our real ambitions to ourselves; otherwise our neighbours will conspire to thwart them. The man who too obviously is playing some one big game arouses resentment among the majority who take life as it comes. A man can hardly rise to the top without being something of a schemer. Unsuccessful schemers are those who cannot disguise their schemes from others; the most successful are those who disguise them from themselves.

Besides this, there is an inner shrine in all of us which we quite properly wish to keep inviolate. No one could bear to write a truthful autobiography, though there may be obvious motives for writing an untruthful one. Still, the less that one has to hide the better. It was Christ who gave to the harmless Greek word for an actor the invidious meaning which has attached itself to "hypocrite." Complete sincerity is a great part of a high character, and in the long run it is true worldly wisdom. "The double heart makes the double head," as an old divine puts it. Poor Dr. Jekyll at last finds that Mr. Hyde is his master.

VII

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

A SPANISH writer, Professor Madariaga, has lately written in praise of the English language. "They are marvellous, those English monosyllables. Their fidelity is so perfect that one is tempted to think English words are the right and proper names which acts were meant to have, and all other words but pitiable failures. How could one improve upon *splash*, *smash*, *ooze*, *shriek*, *slush*, *glide*, *squeak*, *coo*? Who could think of anything more sloppy than *slop*? Is not the word *sweet* a kiss in itself, and what could suggest a more peremptory obstacle than *stop*?"

Mark Twain says the same, coupling his remarks with disparaging judgments on "the awful German language." "Our descriptive words have a deep, strong, resonant sound, while their German equivalents seem thin and mild. *Boom*, *burst*, *crash*, *roar*, *storm*, *bellow*, *blow*, *thunder*, *explosion*; they have a force and magnitude of sound befitting the things which they describe. But their German equivalents would be ever so nice to sing the children to sleep with. Would any man want to die in a battle called by so tame a term as *Schlacht*? Would not a consumptive feel too much bundled up in a shirt-collar and a seal ring who was about to go out

into a storm which the bird-song word *Gewitter* was employed to describe? If a man were told in German to go to *Hölle*, could he rise to the dignity of feeling insulted?"

Comparisons are odious; but I think that by the side of German English generally has the advantage in expressiveness. *Thunder* is a much more expressive word than *Donner*. French is beautifully lucid and precise, but "Beware of Macduff" is a more awful warning than "Prenez garde de Macduff," and in the same play, "I'll give thee wind. Thou art kind" sinks below the level of tragedy if we translate it by "Je vous donnerai le vent. Vous êtes très obligeant."

Mr. Galsworthy, who is himself a master of his own language, ranks it high as a musical and agreeable speech. "I often wonder, if I did not know English, what I should think of the sound of it, well talked. I believe I should esteem it a soft speech, very pleasant to the ear, varied but emphatic, singularly free from guttural or metallic sounds, restful, dignified, and friendly. I believe I should choose it, well spoken, before any language in the world, as the medium of expression of which we would tire last. It has acquired a rich harmony of its own, a vigorous individuality."

I should agree, but with emphasis on the proviso "if well spoken." Mr. Robert Bridges tells us that it is infamously spoken by most people, far worse than French is spoken by any Frenchman. I imagine that our vowels, which, according to Professor

Madariaga, are "always fluid and in process of becoming," with a tendency to fade into a kind of vowel-nebula, make correct speech in English unusually difficult.

Foreigners find it hard, though by resolutely refusing to speak their languages we force them to speak ours, and Scandinavians and Germans often speak it almost perfectly. There are, however, a few snags for those who try to write musical English, especially in poetry. Tennyson says that English always tends to *hiss*.

Neither Professor Madariaga nor Mark Twain has made a complete list of our admirably expressive English words. We have borrowed them from various sources. From the Celtic languages (we are told) come *battle*, *bray*, *budget*, *cargo*, *cart*, *varlet*, all excellent words which suggest their meanings. There is a subtle suggestiveness in certain letters. *Quaver* and *quagmire* suggest trembling; *flounder* and *flop* suggest awkward movement; *scream* and *screech* obviously mean what they do; and so do *dash* and *splash*, *clap*, *rap*, and *slap*. *Gibber*, a perfectly expressive word, may have been invented by Shakespeare ("The sheeted dead did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets").

Portmanteau-words, as Lewis Carroll called them, are probably peculiar to English. Mr. Pearsall Smith thinks that *flaunt*, a most expressive word, is combined from *fly*, *flout*, and *vaunt*, just as Lewis Carroll very nearly succeeded in adding to

the language the verbs to *chortle* and to *galumph*. The appropriateness of such words depends on a rather obscure association of ideas; *chortle* suggests *chuckle* and some other word not clearly conceived.

Rough and vivid words like *swillpot*, *lickspittle*, *spitfire*, *hangdog*, *straphanger*, are made possible by our ease in forming compounds.

The Spanish critic is quite right in calling attention to the vigour of English monosyllables. No other European language has so many. They make English a good language for epigrams, like "I do not like you, Doctor Fell," or the unkind epitaph written by a not too affectionate husband: "Here lies my wife, and let her lie. She is at peace, and so am I." But very short words are equally effective in more serious writing, as in the exquisite poem by F. W. Bourdillon, which appeared in the *Spectator* in 1873:

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.
The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

There was once a critic who, contrasting ancient Greek with English, to the disadvantage of the latter, asked what could be made of a language which translates Homer's *boōs megaloio boeiēn* by

"great ox's hide." But this is not fair. We could find phrases in the English Bible, and lines from Milton, which are as grand as anything in Homer. "The Lord is a man of war; the Lord of Hosts is His name." "He bowed the heavens also and came down, and it was dark under his feet. He rode upon the cherubims and did fly; he came flying upon the wings of the wind." "Yet first to those ychained in sleep, the wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep." "The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng." "With flower-inwoven tresses torn The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn."

Tennyson sometimes rises to the same majesty. "His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud Drops in his vast and wandering grave." Can any other language match the restraint and dignity of the Authorized Version in the following lines? "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm. For love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned."

We have a goodly heritage in our language, but, unlike the French, we leave it to take care of itself. It is suffering severely from the modern habit of too rapid composition and from the pernicious practice of dictation.

VIII

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL TRADITION

DR. NORWOOD, of Harrow, has a very high reputation in his profession, and his new book (*The English Tradition of Education*) will raise it even higher. It is a wise book, such as could have been written only by one who knows well the peculiar history and traditions of secondary education in this country, by one who has had great personal experience, and by one who has a very exalted ideal of what a schoolmaster ought to be. He would possibly agree with the distinguished man who said that if Christ came to earth again He would choose to be a schoolmaster.

This may surprise those who have read Samuel Butler's caricature of Dr. Kennedy in *The Way of All Flesh*, or Mr. Lytton Strachey's half-derisive sketch of Dr. Arnold, or Mr. Wells's diatribes against all schoolmasters except Sanderson of Oundle.

Dr. Norwood thinks that the pre-Victorian schoolmasters, on the whole, deserved the obloquy with which they have been visited, but that Arnold, Thring, and Bowen of Harrow, to mention three names only out of many, were really great men and great reformers. I entirely agree. I have never met abler and better men than several

of the Eton masters whom I knew as a boy and young man.

On the other hand, no words can be too strong to condemn the schools of a hundred and a hundred and fifty years ago. Dr. Norwood has accepted a legendary version of Keate's flogging exploits, but the reality was glorious enough. And we can picture an old-fashioned gesticulating French master shouting: "Je pardonne—l'ignorance, souvent; l'indolence—quelquefois; mais, l'insolence—jamais!" (whack!) The schoolmasters of to-day are blamed unfairly for the faults of an earlier generation. It is no wonder that a head master groaned—"Boys are always reasonable; masters generally; parents never!"

Dr. Norwood, though he is a layman, insists that religion must be the basis of all education. In the day-schools this is often forgotten; the boys are supposed to get religion at home, where they often never hear of it. But what kind of religion does the boy need, and how is it to be given him?

The following opinions are partly my own and partly Dr. Norwood's. I think he would agree with most of them.

Religion must be caught, not taught. A spiritually-minded master is worth more than any divinity lessons. We must face the slight risk that a very dominating personality may force the boys too much into his own groove. No doubt Arnold did this at Rugby.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL TRADITION

A boy who shows signs of talking like a saint should be snubbed. Many boys will say what they think will please, not so much out of hypocrisy as from good manners. There is much unreality in emotional religious professions at all times of life.

Dr. Norwood says that boys should not be taught, in the divinity lesson, what they will afterwards have to unlearn. The principle is sound, but it is difficult to carry out in practice. A man of twenty-five is bound to have outgrown some beliefs which were natural and proper for him at twelve. Besides which, "the parent" is often a fierce Fundamentalist. We shall have no peace in these matters till we recognize that there can be no uniform standard of orthodoxy, for all ages and for all minds.

I agree that compulsory chapel is not a burden, and that a shortened Church of England service, with plenty of simple music—this, and not "High Mass"—is the best for schools. The sermon may be made very useful, for boys are excellent listeners, and remember anything that has impressed them. But visiting preachers make all manner of mistakes. They give the boys a breezy, slangy, army-padre style of sermon, as if (to make a rather profane pun) their business was to preach, not *sursum corda*, but *sursum caudas* ("keep your tails up!"). They talk down to the boys about games and their own school recollections. They preach about sex. (This is a mistake, unless the preacher has exceptional

tact and experience. Many boys are not troubled by these temptations at all. Others are more plagued by them at seventeen and eighteen than they ever will be in after life. But sermons on the subject may do more harm than good.) And, lastly, they try to persuade the boys that they ought all to be parsons.

The sermons which I heard at Eton and remember best were not specially intended for boys at all. The boy is not a separate species. He is very like a man, except that he has had less experience, is more open to personal impressions, and is, as a rule, morally better than a man of fifty, who has usually come to terms with the world and the devil and is suffering from fatty degeneration or sclerosis of the conscience.

At some schools they have "Sunday Questions," to be answered on paper. These perhaps give more amusement to the masters than profit to the boys. I have never forgotten an answer to the question why Eli's sons turned out so badly: "Because Eli was a clergyman, and clergymen's sons always turn out badly."

But the main object of secondary education is to turn out boys who shall represent the national ideal of character on its best side. The real work of Arnold and his numerous disciples was not, as Mr. Bertrand Russell supposes, to train young aristocrats to rule their inferiors and despise them, but to implant the ideas of service, of team-work,

of fair play, and the rest of the very honourable tradition of the English gentleman, in the boys of the middle class.

"The gentleman," says Dr. Norwood, "is he who accepts his position, and strives to fulfil all its responsibilities; and the cad is he who usurps every privilege which he can seize and dishonours every obligation that he can avoid."

Of course, this distinction has nothing whatever to do with heraldry and property in land. But do the critics of our great schools suppose that they are nurseries of this kind of snobbery? There is nowhere where a duke's son is more quickly taught to know his place, which at first is an extremely humble one, than at Eton or Harrow.

I am strongly in favour of building a boy's religion on this national tradition, which is a very fine one, and has the advantage of being indigenous, not exotic. Cardinal Newman, I know, condemns the ideal of a gentleman, in very eloquent language, because it has its roots in pride. He prefers a dishonest Irish beggar woman "who is chaste and goes to Mass" because she is not proud. I do not like the latter type, and I do not think that the humility which is so much valued by the Cardinal is the humility of the New Testament. "Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly." That, it seems to me, is the true humility, and the characteristic of the English gentleman.

IX

SOME WISE SAWS

GEORGE MEREDITH, in *The Shaving of Shagpat*, writes :

Lo ! of hundreds who aspire,
Eighties perish, nineties tire !
Those who bear up, in spite of wrecks and wracks,
Were seasoned by celestial hail of thwacks.

That is to say, if we ever learn wisdom, it is by smarting under the consequences of our blunders. I have made so many that I might fill two or three articles with the good advice which I ought to have followed.

But I will begin with a few thoughts about religion.

One of the hardest problems is to be disinterested without being uninterested. A bigot is a detestable person, but at least he is no Laodicean. He is desperately sincere in hoping for a reserved seat in that part of Heaven from which, as St. Thomas Aquinas says, "a perfect view may be enjoyed of the torments of the damned." On the other hand, the disinterested Christian does not want to burn anybody, but he is apt to be lukewarm. European Christianity has too much the look of an exotic, of which the gardeners are kept in hothouses, while the young plants are in the open air. These things ought not so to be.

There are no lost causes, because there are no gained causes. Good and evil may be scotched, but never killed.

There are tides in the spiritual life. We should not worry too much when the tide goes out. It is a sign of life, not of death.

Faith makes many of the mountains which it has to remove.

There are two kinds of fools. One says, "This is old, therefore it is good"; the other says, "This is new, therefore it is better."

A man keeps through his whole life the mentality of the religion in which he was brought up, even when he has rejected it completely.

Next I will add a number of observations on our dealings with our neighbours, especially with those whom we do not like.

Criticize opinions and institutions, but do not attack individuals. That is right, no doubt, and I shall not change my rule. But it is unwise. Individuals sometimes forgive, institutions never. And in controversy they prefer what Campbell-Bannerman called the methods of barbarism.

Spiritual swashbucklers are like St. Peter, who first cut off a poor man's ear and then thrice denied his Lord.

Bullying may make a man unsay, but it cannot make him unsee.

Intellectual differences seldom cause wounds,

except when very unintellectual passions are behind them.

Critics, said Nietzsche, are vermin who bite to live, not to hurt. They want our blood, not our pain. This, however, is not always true, I am afraid.

To most people argument only makes a point more doubtful and less impressive.

You can generally get success if you do not want victory.

If I were to behave to John as he is now behaving to me, he would think of me what I now think of him.

If John tells me something unpleasant which James has said about me, I must not tell John what I think of James, for he will certainly repeat it.

If you have anything pleasant to say put it on paper; but quarrels, if we must quarrel, should always be by word of mouth.

The height of good manners is never to *think* unfavourably of the person with whom you are talking. If I say to myself, "What a frightful bore this fellow is!" he will assuredly guess my thoughts, and, as a Frenchman said, we forgive those who bore us, but not those whom we bore.

One touch of ill nature makes the whole world kin.

It is useless to quarrel with an old man for being a reactionary, and with a very young man for being a revolutionary. Fifty years hence the second will be what the first is now.

Don't think about the faults of your friends, but

about the merits of your enemies, and remember the advice of Epictetus, to say, when anyone expresses very unfair opinions about yourself, "Well, it seems so to him."

On the conduct of life generally the following rules have fixed themselves in my mind.

Actum ne agas, as the Romans said. Don't reopen a debate in your own mind which you have once settled. Turn over the page and forget it. One of the most valuable of all kinds of self-mastery is the power of switching off thoughts at the bidding of the will. I have always found this extremely difficult, especially thoughts of anger. It is supremely important, because our thoughts almost literally cut grooves for themselves in the mind. The grooves get deeper and deeper, and our thoughts flow in them more and more irresistibly, till our judgment is quite warped. Nursing a grudge in this way is most pernicious, especially when we rehearse to ourselves the scathing rejoinder which we could make if we liked. Sooner or later out come these crushing retorts, and we have made an enemy for life.

To brain workers. If you find yourself working more than nine hours a day at a task requiring severe concentration, do not congratulate yourself on your industry, but knock off two hours. Depend upon it, you have been sitting with a book before you and wasting time. Seven hours of hard brain-work is about as much as anyone can do.

In judging what is going on around you, don't

mistake the exceptional for the important, whatever the newspapers may say.

"The early bird gets the worm." No doubt; but early rising conduces so much to spiritual pride that it is a dangerous habit. Besides, it is the early worm that is got by the bird, and the early Christian who is got by the lion. It is a mistake to be a pioneer unless you are willing to be a martyr. If you are, all honour to you.

If you write for the general public, you will be insulted and told that you are no scholar. If you write for scholars, you will have no influence, for we have lived to see the word "highbrow" coined as a term of contempt. The choice between the solid, liquid, and gaseous forms of communicating ideas is difficult. Ideas solidify at a very low temperature; but in the gaseous state the environing temperature is unpleasantly warm.

X

SOME DISRESPECTFUL CRITICISMS

"*Maxima magnorum deliramenta virorum.*" This "Leonine" hexameter is my own composition, based on a remark of St. Augustine that some opinions are too silly for any except very learned men to hold. Similarly, I have sometimes thought that some jobs are too flagrant for any except men of the highest probity to commit. Augustine's remark may be some consolation to us when we have said or done anything unusually foolish. It may be a sign of greatness.

In this article I propose to let off steam at the expense of several great men. It will do them no harm, since they are all dead and safe on inaccessible pedestals.

(1) "Virtue is a mean between two extremes" (Aristotle). This was the opinion of Mr. Brooke, in *Middlemarch*, who was always careful "not to go too far." It was also the rule of the English statesmen of whom it was truly said that through his career he never deviated from the narrow path which divides right from wrong. It is a good rule for those who put "safety first," though even so it is sometimes wiser to cross the road than to stand in the middle. The question is whether "mean"

ought not to be "meanness." I remember a clever poem in the *Cambridge Review* for 1897 describing such a person, who "In fear the dread extremes to touch, Through moderation to excel Will strive, and never do too much, Or much too well. In all debate with placid pride, He sees whate'er the rest have seen, And loves to speak on either side, And vote between. Not rash in gainful enterprise, Yet keen to 'scape a pauper's doom, He sells before the slump and buys Before the boom." And so on.

(2) "It is only weak eyes that water at the misfortunes of another" (Seneca). The Stoics taught that we should be very benevolent and truly kind, without feeling any real pity. It is the exact opposite of St. Paul's exhortation to "rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep." If I were preaching I might say that this is one of the main differences between Christianity and ancient philosophy. I think we should all much prefer a friend who is really sorry for us when we are down on our luck, even if he were rather less practical than the dry-eyed and dry-hearted Stoic. In fact, the maxim should be left to cynics like La Rochefoucauld, who said that there is always something agreeable to us in the misfortunes of our friends. Alas! he was not wholly wrong.

(3) "I think, therefore I am" (Descartes). This aphorism has made the immortal reputation of this philosopher. I maintain that there is nothing in it. If I wished to dispute my own existence as a separate

person, I should say that there is no "I" to think. Something or somebody thinks in me. I am never really conscious of myself. This may be true or false, but we have no right to beg the question by putting the word "I"—the very point in dispute—into the premise of the argument. And what is the meaning of "I am?" If the verb is a copula, as when a clergyman says, "Well, I am —," and then thinks better of it, nothing whatever has been said. If it means, "I am an ultimately real substance," the statement is rather audacious. It does not follow that one who thinks is an ultimate reality, nor do we know in what ultimate reality consists. In fact, this pretentious argument seems to me to have very little value.

(4) "Force is no remedy" (Gladstone). In many cases force is the only remedy. You cannot get rid of a decayed tooth, or lift a motor-car out of a ditch, without a good deal of force. Politically, the maxim is part of the drivel of nineteenth-century Liberalism. Never coerce, always conciliate. Put down rebellions with rose-water. We had better give our enemies everything that they ask for, and bank on their gratitude. The truth, of course, is that we frequently have to choose between the big stick and the payment of blackmail. Both are bad, but sometimes one is right, sometimes the other.

(5) "The Empire fell to pieces while Christians were quarrelling about an *iota* in the Creed" (Carlyle and many others). The reference, of

course, is to the Arian controversy, as to whether the Second Person of the Trinity is of the same substance as the Father (*homoousios*) or of like substance (*homoiousios*). The question may seem to the modern man somewhat remote from actuality. In our day, as Mr. Guedalla (I think) has said, "Any stigma is good enough to beat a dogma." But the assertion implied in the words, "quarrelling about an iota," is that two words which are spelt almost alike must be practically identical in meaning. This is utterly silly. It would follow that there can be no appreciable difference between a virgin and a birch-rod, since in French it needs only an iota to change one into the other.

(6) "In ten years Europe will be either republican or Cossack" (Napoleon). The false prophecies of great practical statesmen would form a most interesting collection. These are the men to whom the destinies of unhappy mankind are entrusted. It is they who send young men by millions to the shambles, and decide that the spirit of the age demands this or that change. And they cannot see a yard beyond their noses. Their predictions are almost always wrong. What were the real hopes and fears of the men who at a moment's notice turned Europe into a co-operative suicide society sixteen years ago it is difficult to say; but we may conjecture that they were as wide of the mark as the dictum of Napoleon, who thought that in ten years Europe would be either republican or Cossack.

(7) "You can fool all the people for a short time, and some people all the time; but you cannot fool all the people all the time" (Abraham Lincoln). This is a characteristic sugar-plum for the great fetish, Democracy. As if any statesman wished to fool all the people all the time! What he wants, and knows very well how to manage, is to fool the majority of the people a little while before a General Election. And it is a good deal to expect that the resultant of half a dozen conflicting follies is wisdom.

(8) "I'll *gild* the faces of his grooms withal, That it must seem their *guilt*" (Shakespeare). The murder scene in *Macbeth* is universally admired. But I want to know, is this, or is it not, the world's worst pun? And what a scene to cheapen with this execrable witticism!

(9) "Tyger, tyger, burning bright In the forests of the night" (Blake). This is one of the poems which are supposed to place Blake on one of the summits of Parnassus. He was puzzled to know whether the same Creator produced the "Tyger" and the lamb. He evidently thought that the tiger's coat phosphoresces like a glow-worm, instead of being a very effective camouflage in the jungle. A naturalist would share his surprise at an arrangement so obviously in the interest of the tiger's victims, and so little in his own.

(10) "He who hath bent him o'er the dead . . . 'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more." This is the

most highly finished passage in Byron; it has been hugely admired. These lines, wrote Sir E. Brydges, "are so beautiful, so original, and so utterly beyond the reach of anyone whose poetical genius was not very decided, and very rich, that they alone are sufficient to secure celebrity to this poem." Well and good; but I want to hear a little more about the man who hath bent him o'er the dead. He is left hanging in the air, without a verb to bless himself with. After a long parenthesis, the sentence ends, "'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more."

(11) "Since the time of Constantine there has been nothing but tawdry rubbish in the shape of architecture. The hopeless bad taste of the Papists is a source of continual gratification to me" (T. H. Huxley). The sublimity of this passage would only be spoilt by comment. The same eminent biologist, the hammer of the orthodox, was not content with coining the word *agnostic*. He was unlucky enough to add, "On all these questions I am content to say *Agnosco*." (When Smith minor comes home at Christmas he will explain to his mother and sisters that *agnosco* means "I recognize," not "I am ignorant.")

Well, I think I have stirred up enough wasps' nests this time. The paternity of Queen Elizabeth was nothing to it.

XI

OUR COUNTRY CHURCHES

I HAVE sometimes wondered what I should most like to see in England if I were a foreigner on a visit. Our countryside is incomparably beautiful in the late spring and early summer; but our scenery is tame compared with what the continent of Europe and America have to show. Our mountains, except in Skye, are not more than what Dr. Johnson called the Scottish hills (to annoy Boswell), "considerable protuberances," and our waterfalls are contemptible.

Among the works of man we are justly proud of our old cathedral cities, of Oxford and Cambridge, and of our country houses and parks, to which I suppose Mr. Snowden means to give the *coup de grâce* next year. Besides these, what have we to show? I answer, our country churches. There is nothing like them, I believe, in any other country. Of these old Gothic shrines no two are alike. We may stop our car in a dozen villages in succession and there will be something fresh, some new effect of quaintness, of beauty, of historical interest, in every one. In not a few there are genuine scraps of Saxon work, with possibly even a few unmistakable Roman bricks.

The solid Norman pillars and richly-ornamented doorways tell their own tale in hundreds of churches.

Characteristically English are the large east windows, reaching right down to the top of the altar. We shall be lucky if we do not find that an ignorant Anglo-Catholic vicar has blocked up the lower half of the window with a reredos. In England we want all the light we can get inside a church: in Italy and Spain the sun is an enemy to be kept outside. Hence the peculiarly English style of church architecture—the Perpendicular, in which the walls are nearly all window.

In East Anglia there are scores of magnificent churches in this style, with graceful wooden roofs, since the much perforated walls will not bear a very heavy weight. These churches are, and always were, far too large for the parishes which they serve. It is a mystery how the parishioners raised the money to build them. Wageless labour and corporate enthusiasm are, I suppose, the answer. Our ancestors wished to glorify God in what was then a living language. Gothic architecture is not, as Coleridge said, petrified religion; it is rather frozen music—frozen, but not silent, for every one of these buildings has a soul of its own, which speaks audibly to all who have ears to hear.

Have we ever noticed the little grooves scooped out of the stone in the church porch? That is where the famous English archers sharpened their arrows. It was no sacrilege to use consecrated stones for this purpose, and no sacrilege to practise with the long-bow on Sundays. It was one of the first duties

of an English yeoman to learn to bend those mighty bows of yew. Crécy, Poitiers, Agincourt and Flodden were their reward; and, better still, the bullying of the robber baron in his coat of mail was stopped by the advent of the archer.

How much of our history lives in these old churches! Here and there we may see bullet marks in the walls, the traces of a skirmish in the great Rebellion. In Tewkesbury Abbey the adherents of the Red and White Roses fought and slaughtered each other in the church itself. Scottish and Welsh marauders have left their mark on several churches near the Borders.

Of course we all deplore the vandalism of the Puritans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is unintelligible to us, just because architecture, like the rest of religious art, is no longer a living language in our day. Modern churches may be scientifically correct, but their stone and brick have no more soul than a university prize poem in Greek or Latin. But when the Reformers set to work to smash the ornaments and furniture of the churches they were breaking things which were still eloquent; and they hated the eloquence. In Scotland they did their work so thoroughly that almost every medieval church became a ruin.

It was very deplorable; but religion, when it is in earnest, is a violent thing. In the same way, the early Christians smashed the inimitable masterpieces of Greek sculptors because their neighbours

still believed in Jupiter and Venus, and they half believed in them themselves. We take the utmost care of the fragments, and replace the statues of saints in their niches, because if there ever was a devil in these figures it has long since departed.

And how much history there is in the tombs! What fine gentlemen and ladies were those armoured knights and their wives, lying side by side in the chancel! And then we smile at those eighteenth-century monuments. "Here lies A. B., rector of this parish, descended from a younger branch of the noble family of Fitzbattleaxe." And there is a bishop in a western cathedral who was "distinguished for the dignity of his deportment, the affability of his manners, and his success in repressing enthusiasm."

I have a sneaking affection for the unrestored church, with a box for the squire, made comfortable with cushions, a little fireplace and a poker. It is like the King's gallery in a royal chapel. And why not? The squire was a little king within the ring-fence of his estate.

I remember as a little boy spelling out the inscription on the tomb of a former rector of the village where we lived, who, it was recorded, "took joyfully the spoiling of his goods." "What a *very* good man he must have been!" I innocently remarked. My mother, who was a Jacobite, almost snorted with indignation. "He was not at all a good man. He was put into the rectory by Oliver Crom-

OUR COUNTRY CHURCHES

well, and very properly turned out when the King came back."

There is a delightful inscription over the door of a church in the Midlands, built during the Protectorate by a great nobleman to defy Oliver. It is, I believe, the only church that was built in the sixteen hundred and forties.

If in our holiday wanderings we want something less historical and more humorous, we shall find much to amuse us, but not without sympathy, in the poetry of the mourner. The son who used his father's grave as an advertisement was surely born before his time.

Beneath this stone, in hopes of Zion,
There lies the landlord of the Lion.
Resigned to the Almighty's will,
His son keeps on the business still.

But we are genuinely sorry for the parents who wrote:

We have lost our little Hannah
In a very painful manner.
At the tender age of seven
She was taken up to heaven.

Our churchyards are full of these quaint epitaphs; but we can hardly match the Irish inscription on a grave: "Erected to the memory of Patrick Murphy, accidentally shot as a mark of affection by his brother."

To return to the buildings themselves. Not being

an architect, I will dare to say that our English churches have more *soul* than those of any other country.

The great French churches are too high and narrow; they look slightly pinched when compared with Lincoln or York. And in St. Peter's I can only feel that it is a very suitable appanage to the palace of a Roman emperor, and I have wondered whether Trajan and Tacitus would have been more disgusted to see a Christian priest lording it in the Eternal City or interested in this last chapter of the history of the Roman Empire. But St. Mark's at Venice certainly has a soul, and so has St. Sophia at Constantinople—a soul in Purgatory.

I hope I shall not be thought disloyal to St. Paul's when I say that one of my pleasures on a summer holiday is the Sunday worship in some quiet country church. The soul of old England lives there as nowhere else.

XII

“FIVE DEANS”

MR. SIDNEY DARK, the editor of the most widely circulated newspaper of the Established Church, is an Anglican who abhors Anglicanism, and quite openly deplores the revolt which gained the independence of the Church of England in the sixteenth century. The result of this revolt, it appears, was a “sorry gift to the world of a new, colourless, negative religion”—the religion to which Anglicans belong.

Here we have one of those charming anomalies which have made Englishmen what they are. In no other country, we may reflect with pride, would the *Church Times* be possible. If the Editor does not like being mixed up with colourless, negative, and (worst of all) new Christians, why in the world does he not return to the hospitable bosom of the One True Church? Why? Because he is an Englishman. Is he going to forfeit the Englishman’s privilege of abusing his institutions? Not he. Why, if he could persuade his proprietors to transfer his newspaper to the True Fold, “purified by the Counter-Reformation” and the Jesuits, and were to continue to criticize the powers that be, as he does now, we know from the example of the *Action Française* exactly what would happen. There would

be an edict that any Catholic found in possession of a copy of the *Church Times* shall be buried like a dog, and debarred from Christian marriage for himself and his family.

No, say what they will, the Anglo-Catholics are the most intensely English of all religious bodies. Roman Catholicism is international, though pre-vaillingly Mediterranean; Lutheranism is Teutonic; but Anglo-Catholicism is the exclusive glory of Anglo-Saxons. No other race has a spiritual digestion tough enough to swallow such a mass of engaging inconsistencies.

Five Deans is a collection of Lytton Strachey-like appreciations (or depreciations) of four eminent Churchmen long dead, and of one nonentity who, unfortunately, is still alive. Three of the five were Deans of St. Paul's, one of Westminster; the fifth is the redoubtable Dean of St. Patrick's, who wrote a savage and rather obscene book of satires which has ever since formed part of every child's library.

John Colet, the greatest of all my predecessors, escapes censure, for he lived too early to be a Protestant. Besides, there is nothing but good to say about him. He was one of the glories of the late-flowering English Renaissance, the friend of Erasmus, a pioneer of critical New Testament scholarship, and the founder of St. Paul's School, which, after his experience of Deans and Chapters, he most wisely placed under the care of a lay corporation, the Mercers' Company.

"FIVE DEANS"

And those who remember how pacifists were treated during the Great War will realize what courage it required to stand up to Henry VIII, who was preparing to send an army into France, more in the hope of military glory than because the French had given him any provocation. Colet preached an eloquent peace sermon before the King himself, so that Henry "was in some apprehension lest the soldiers, whom he was on the point of leading abroad, should feel their courage gone through this discourse."

But instead of hurrying Colet off to the block, or to whatever penalty the "Dora" of the time assigned for such temerity, the burly Defender of the Faith invited the Dean to lunch, and merely "wished him to say at some other time, and with clearer explanation, what he had already said with perfect truth—namely, that for Christians no war was a just one. And this for the sake of the rough soldiers, who might put a different construction on his words from that which the Dean had intended."

Colet was indeed a very noble character. Mr. Dark would not agree with Seeböhm, who places him among the pioneers of the Reformation. Like Erasmus, Colet wanted a Reformation, but not the Reformation which actually occurred. It is quite possible that if he had lived a little longer he would have shared the fate of More and Fisher, since he was not the man to conceal his convictions.

I have in my dining-room a good contemporary portrait of Donne, the poet and Dean of St. Paul's from 1621 to 1631. It is not the face of an ecclesiastic; beyond this, it reveals nothing of his character. Donne is just now the darling of our literary critics, so that it is rash to speak in his dispraise. But on the whole I agree with Mr. Dark's low estimate of his character. He was no gentleman, and a very equivocal Christian. I have a rooted distrust of men of letters who, like Donne, Huysmans, and the African novelist Apuleius, wallow in garbage for many years and then suddenly "get religion." Their conversion may be genuine, but, alas, it is not difficult for a brilliant writer to adopt the language and sentiments of piety. The suspicion is increased when there is a professional obligation to be edifying.

The character of Swift will always continue to be discussed. He was probably abnormal, both physically and mentally, and it is not for us to judge in such cases. He was a great genius, whose pathological condition made him profoundly miserable, and his religious faith, if he had any, was not strong enough to bring any peace to his tormented spirit.

With Dean Stanley we are brought to a period easily within living memory. He was a very notable personality, though hardly a great man. As a Churchman, he stood for comprehensiveness and toleration. The Established Church was to be the

"FIVE DEANS"

Church of all Englishmen who accepted the Reformation and who were willing to avail themselves of its privileges. He believed that even a Unitarian scholar who wished to communicate in Westminster Abbey showed himself thereby to be enough of a Christian to justify his admission to the sacrament.

It is difficult to realize the tempest of rage which descended upon Stanley's head for this action. I have myself seen a girl in the uniform of the American Salvation Army kneeling at the altar rails in the Abbey, although it is well known that many Salvationists are unbaptized; and it is probable that Quakers have received the sacrament both there and at St. Paul's. Stanley undoubtedly minimized the importance of definite beliefs; but I cannot help thinking that his genial charity was more Christian than the rigid exclusiveness which wrecked the movement for reunion in the years after the war.

The last of the five biographies has for its subject my unworthy self—unworthy, certainly, to figure in such distinguished company. Mr. Dark is so much less fierce and contemptuous than I should have expected that I am quite disarmed. But there are two little protests that I wish to make.

It is not fair or true to say that I dislike the British working man. Individually, I have always found him a very good fellow, generous, kindly,

and humorous. I think he has always been much the same. Shakespeare's Bottom the Weaver is a type which we all recognize. But I maintain that the politicians are corrupting his citizenship by their pampering and pauperizing legislation. Our industries are overweighted with a constantly increasing mass of bounties, pensions, and doles, which have grievously retarded the economic recovery of the country since 1918.

I have also said that a country which depends for its existence on its export trade can scarcely hope to be a working man's paradise. It was a disagreeable remark; but, in view of the present condition of our industries, can anyone deny that it is true? Political power has been transferred to the masses, and they naturally wish to transfer the wealth to their own pockets. A man may surely point out the dangers and the injustice of a policy of confiscation without being an enemy of the working man. Frederick the Great said: "I take what I want; I can always find pedants to prove my right to it." Well, I don't want to be one of the pedants.

Secondly, about my alleged hatred of the Roman Catholic Church. I wish to distinguish. I have a great and growing respect for the Catholic scholastic theology, which is much more to my taste than to the taste of most philosophers of our time. I have one or two Roman Catholic friends, and I hope I can appreciate the noble characters of

"FIVE DEANS"

many Catholic saints. But I fear and distrust that arrogant and cruel international corporation which presumes to unchurch all other Christians. Catholics believe that Christ meant to found a universal theocratic empire. I deny it absolutely.

THREE LECTURES

ENGLISH RELIGIOUS POETRY

Delivered to the Royal Society of Literature

THE average Englishman is as little likely to take the poets for his spiritual guides as to wish that a philosopher was his king. Poets and philosophers are idealists; and as a practical man, the average Englishman finds idealism out of place in so serious a business as saving his soul or governing the country. If he deigns to read the poets at all, they are the companions of his lightest or of his heaviest hours; he reads in bed after his morning tea, or devotes to the muses the dregs of a busy day. We are not, as Carlyle complains, like the "old Arabs," who "would sing and kindle bonfires and solemnly thank the gods that in their tribe too a poet had shown himself." However that may be, the old Greeks, whose manners and customs are more important to us than those of the old Arabs, used to sit at the feet of the poets, who were, as Aristophanes says, the schoolmasters of the full-grown. It is a pity that we do not treat our classics with the same seriousness. For the best of our English wisdom, and our clearest visions of truth, beauty, and goodness, are enshrined in our poetry. Our best poetry is generally serious, moral, didactic,

often definitely religious in its aim. Our poets have aspired with Milton to "justify the ways of God to men," or, with Wordsworth, have considered the object of poetry to be "general and operative truth." Of these aims the former might seem to identify poetry with theology, the latter with philosophy. Such an identification certainly could not be accepted; but a very bold man might maintain the thesis that poetry is the proper vehicle for both these sciences. Does not religion teach by preference in parables? Has not miracle been called faith's dearest child; and have not faith's profoundest intuitions been frequently wrapped up in poetical myths and symbols, which dogmatism heavily asseverates as flat historical recitals, and rationalism as ponderously rejects? Is religious truth even capable of being expressed in prose? Is there not more of Christianity in the *Te Deum* than in all the three creeds? Poetry, for those who can appreciate it, can interpret spiritual reality better than creed and dogma; its forms are less rigid and more transparent. "Some form of song or musical language," says Principal Shairp, "is the best possible adumbration of spiritual realities." And if we turn to philosophy, have not the greatest philosophers been more than half poets? We value Spinoza, not for his geometrical metaphysics, but for the flashes of vision in which the "intellectual love of God" made him a "God-drunken man." And Plato is for ever unintelligible until we read

him as a prophet and prose-poet, and cease to hunt for a "system," made in Germany, in his writings. Even Kant, as that brilliant renegade Englishman, Houston Chamberlain, has lately shown us, was by no means the model professor of philosophy, but a seer with a broad and sane outlook upon life, who held that "wisdom is the companion of simplicity," and that "we can only understand what we do ourselves." Kant, however, was no poet; for his confession, "I only see what I think," seems to have been literally true.

I am not forgetting that fine stanza of William Watson about the difference between prose and poetry:—

Forget not, brother singer, that though prose
Can never be too truthful, nor too wise,
Song is not Truth, nor Wisdom, but the rose
Upon Truth's lips, the light in Wisdom's eyes.

But perhaps truth is most truly seen when her lips no longer look pale, and wisdom most wisely known when her eyes are seen to shine.

In any case, an unusually large proportion of the best English poetry may be said to convey religious teaching and to be inspired by religious emotion. The proportion of French poetry of which this could be affirmed is very much smaller, of German poetry decidedly smaller. Religion I take to consist of faith, hope, and love, raised to that higher power in which they and their objects are felt *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Religious poetry is verse which satisfies the conditions of poetry, and in which this source of inspiration is clearly traceable. It is not necessary that the language of theology should be used. All poetry which sees the divine in nature or man is, to that extent, religious. On the other hand, poetry which deals with so-called religious subjects is not necessarily religious at all. The *Metamorphoses* of Ovid is entirely devoted to the doings of the gods and goddesses who were the objects of worship in the state religion. But no more irreligious poem was ever written. It is enough to recall the picture of the father of gods and men deliberating over a new amorous intrigue:

Hoc certe furtum coniunx mea nesciet, inquit;
Aut si rescierit, sunt O sunt iurgia tanti!

Nor can we call such tepid moralizing as that of Pope's *Essay on Man* religious. It is wholly on the level of the understanding; where it is nearest to religion it is farthest from poetry. Poetry, as poetry, has nothing to do with systems of ethics. And there are greater men than Ovid and Pope, who, though they have sometimes written finely about religion, are not religious poets. Goethe surpassed even Bacon as the creator of wise and illuminating aphorisms, and many of them deal with religion; but at bottom I believe he was thoroughly in earnest about two things only—science and art. In one of his best-known epigrams he says, not truly,

that he who has science and art has also religion. Victor Hugo, who proposed to confront the Creator on the day of judgment with "pride in his port, defiance in his eye," is still farther from the religious attitude. Our own greatest, Shakespeare, was not, if I may venture to say it, a religious man. He understands religion, as he understands everything else, and can draw it; but I do not think that he feels it. These are mighty architectonic minds, which impose the forms of the human spirit upon plastic material. But the religious poet must view life and nature in a humbler temper. He must have "a heart that watches and receives"; he must sit still and "hearken what the Lord God will say concerning him." It is not quite enough that he should fulfil Bishop Westcott's definition of a poet, "one who sees the infinite in things"; the infinite that he sees must be the Eternal whom man can worship. Not that religious poetry need be strictly theistic; there is a poetry of pantheism which is clearly religious. Some of Wordsworth's noblest poetry, Emily Brontë's dying ode, and some of George Meredith's poems, belong to this type. But we must not open our doors wide enough to admit Swinburne's *Hertha*, the carmagnole of religion.

The majority of *hymns* do not rise to the level of poetry, and therefore need not occupy us to-day. We must, however, remember, in judging hymns, that they are made to be sung by congregations, and

therefore must be judged by a different standard from poetry which is meant to be read. There are some hymns, of which that beginning "There is a land of pure delight" is a good example, which have the value of real poetry when sung to an appropriate tune, though none could give them a high rank as lyrics. The famous hymn, "O God, our help in ages past," is only a moderately good metrical version of a psalm, but when sung it is magnificent. But it would be possible to make out a fairly long list of good hymns which are also fine poems in themselves. Such are Bishop Ken's morning and evening hymns; Cowper's "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord," and "Sometimes a light surprises the Christian while he sings"; Heber's "Brightest and best of the Sons of the Morning"; Newman's "Lead, kindly Light"; and Montgomery's "For ever with the Lord." "Nearer, my God, to Thee," though ridiculed by Matthew Arnold, has some genuine poetry in it.

The majority of hymns have, no doubt, earned the judgments passed by Fuller upon Sternhold and Hopkins: "Their piety was better than their poetry, and they have drunk more of Jordan than of Helicon." Yet ever Sternhold and Hopkins, or one of them, have deviated into poetry on at least one occasion. It would be hard to find a nobler stanza than this from their version of the eighteenth Psalm.

ENGLISH RELIGIOUS POETRY

The Lord descended from above,
 He bowed the heavens most high,
 And underneath His feet He cast
 The darkness of the sky.

On cherubs and on cherubims
 Right royally he rode,
 And on the wings of mighty winds
 Came flying all abroad.

Akin to hymns, and to be judged by the same standard, are Christmas carols and other sacred folk-songs. The famous "Lyke-wake Dirge":

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
 Every nighte and alle,
 Fire and sleet¹ and candle lighte,
 And Christe receive thy soule,

can never be forgotten when it has once been read. The soul of the Middle Ages breathes from it no less than from the tremendous "Dies irae dies illa." Some of the early carols are very sweet, like the fifteenth-century song to the Virgin:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| I sing of a maiden | That is makeless, |
| King of all kings | To her son she ches. |
| He came all so still | Where his mother was |
| As dew in April | That falleth on the grass. |
| He came all so still | There his mother lay, |
| As dew in April | That falleth on the spray. |
| Mother and maiden | Was never none but she; |
| Well may such a lady | Goddess mother be. |

¹ Or perhaps "fleet" = "floor."

Equally beautiful is the Pre-Reformation carol "In dulci iubilo," with its alternations of Latin and English, of glory and humiliation; but this, I fear, was made in Germany.

It is not of hymns or carols that I wish to speak in this paper. If our delimitation of religious poetry is accepted, many of our greatest writers must be included among religious poets; and what is more, they have often made their highest flights when speaking as religious men. Milton alone is a compensation for not being able, in this connection, to quote Shakespeare. If we were set to the hard task of choosing the two most perfect pieces of poetry in the English language, I do not think we should be far wrong in selecting two passages of Milton—one, the exquisite ode beginning, "Blest pair of sirens, pledges of heaven's joy," and the other the nobly pathetic lines, "Hail, holy Light, offspring of heaven first-born," ending with "things invisible to mortal sight." Only just below these sublime peaks is the youthful Nativity Ode, in which the "God-gifted organ voice of England" has brought more sonorous melodies out of the English language than any later poet has been able to elicit. Spenser's *Heavenly Love* and *Heavenly Beauty* make Plato's philosophy "musical as is Apollo's lute." Wordsworth is confessedly at his best when his reverence for nature passes into contemplation of the Divine in nature. Among the group of great poets just below these giants, the

religious sense is, in most of them, strongly developed. In this they are true representatives of their countrymen. The English genius is not vulgarly "practical"—that development is a mere episode connected with the exploitation of our coal and iron fields, our geographical position, and our other natural "advantages." Far more truly our own is a grave and serious idealism, not lucidly philosophical nor daring in speculation, but reverent, dignified, and manly, with both feet planted on solid earth, but with eyes straining to pierce through the mist which shrouds a world of soft, mysterious, half-veiled beauty, a world of greys, greens, and browns, like our English landscape, with no fierce southern lights, hard outlines, and brilliant colours.

I do not propose in this paper to give you a roll of honour with snippets of criticism about each name. There are several books about English literature, written by eminent critics, in which our religious poetry is competently dealt with. I do not think that I could contribute anything valuable in purely literary criticism. I wish instead to consider our religious poetry under what is a comparatively fresh aspect, by comparing the work of poets who were influenced by different types of religious belief.

There are names which refuse this kind of classification. The greatest name of all, Milton, cannot reasonably be placed in a catalogue of Protestant

poets. One critic, I know, has said that "Puritanism produced our greatest poet, next to Shakespeare"; to which another has rejoined that Puritanism spoilt him. I do not think that Puritanism either made or spoilt Milton. He is too great to be used in partisan controversy. "His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart." Perhaps his was not a very amiable or sympathetic character—the same has been said about Wordsworth—but the intellectual vision for which he prayed, as a compensation for his loss of sight, was not denied him. Our "mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies" remains the glory of the whole English race, without distinction of creed.

Catholic poetry was thoroughly English till the Reformation. Since that great revolution it has tended to be a thing apart, and has not exhibited the national characteristics in their integrity. The religious poetry of the Renaissance was joyous and picturesque, in sympathy with the genial festivals of the undivided Church, and now quite legitimately reminiscent of the ancient civilization which bequeathed Catholicism to the world as the last of its creative achievements. The poem of William Dunbar, on the Nativity, is a good example, and I will quote the last two stanzas:

Now spring up flouris fra the rute,
 Revert you upward naturally,
 In honour of the blessed frute
 That raiss up fro the rose Mary;

ENGLISH RELIGIOUS POETRY

Lay out your leivis lustily,
 Fro deid take life now at the lest
 In worship of that Prince worthy
Qui nobis puer natus est.

Sing, heaven imperial, most of height!
 Regions of air make harmony!
 All fish in flud and fowl of flight
 Be mirthful and make melody!
 All *Gloria in excelsis* cry!
 Heaven, earth, sea, man, bird and beast—
 He that is crowned above the sky
Pro nobis puer natus est!

After the Reformation all religious poetry becomes more didactic, personal, introspective, and meditative; this applies to Catholic as well as to Protestant poets. The seventeenth century is enriched by Crashaw, a convert to Catholicism, who died in the service of the Holy House at Loretto in 1650. Crashaw is one of the most uneven of our poets, but if we take him at his best, as every poet has a right to be taken, he must be given a high rank. His lines on St. Teresa are all on fire with the inspiration of fervent devotion.

Live here, great heart, and love and die and kill,
 And bleed, and wound, and yield, and conquer still.
 Let this immortal life, where'er it comes,
 Walk in a crowd of loves and martyrdoms.
 Let mystic deaths wait on it, and wise souls be
 The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee.
 O sweet incendiary! show here thine art
 Upon this carcase of a hard, cold heart;

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

Let all thy scattered shafts of light, that play
Among the leaves of thy large books of day,
Combined against this breast at once break in,
And take away from me myself and sin;
This glorious robbery shall thy bounty be,
And my best fortunes such fair spoils of me.
O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires,
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove,
By all thy lives and deaths of love,
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire,
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting soul and sealed thee his;
By all the heavens thou hast in him,
Fair sister of the seraphim!
By all of him we have in thee,
Leave nothing of myself in me:
Let me so read thy life that I
Unto all life of mine may die.

Pope's remarks on Crashaw are one of the curiosities of criticism. "I take this poet to have writ like a gentleman; that is, at leisure hours, and more to keep out of idleness than to establish a reputation; so that nothing regular or just can be expected of him. All that regards design, form, fable (which is the soul of poetry), all that concerns exactness, or consent of parts (which is the body), will probably be wanting; only pretty conceptions, fine metaphors, glittering expressions, and some-

thing of a neat cast of verse (which are properly the dress, gems, or loose ornaments of poetry), may be found in these verses." This of the author of the burning lines which I have just quoted; and of such gems as the following "Epitaph on a Young Married Couple, dead and buried together":

To these, whom Death again did wed,
This grave's their second marriage-bed;
For though the hand of Fate could force
Twixt soul and body a divorce,
It could not sunder man and wife,
'Cause they both livèd but one life.
Peace, good reader, do not weep.
Peace, the lovers are asleep.
They, sweet turtles, folded lie
In the last knot that love could tie.
And though they lie as they were dead,
Their pillow stone, their sheets of lead
(Pillow hard, and sheets not warm);
Love made the bed; they'll take no harm;
Let them sleep, let them sleep on,
Till this stormy night be gone;
And the eternal morrow dawn;
Then the curtains will be drawn,
And they wake into a light,
Whose day shall never sleep in night.

English Catholicism in the nineteenth century produced two notable writers of religious verse, John Henry Newman and Coventry Patmore. The latter, a graceful and gentle singer of domestic affection and devout sentiment, has, I think, been overpraised as a poet by his co-religionists. Of

Newman's poetry it is difficult to speak worthily. The limpid, unemphatic beauty of his prose style does not desert him in verse, and it is well suited to the dignity of an ecclesiasticism which has a great tradition behind it. But the extreme narrowness of his sympathies, and his intense medievalism, are rather chilling. He cannot own the spell of Pagan antiquity, even while on a visit to Italy, without the same qualms of conscience which make Jerome fear, quite unnecessarily, that he was becoming a Ciceronian.

Why, wedded to the Lord, still yearns my heart
Towards these scenes of ancient heathen fame?
Yet legend hoar, and voice of bard that came
Fixing my restless youth with its sweet art,
And shades of power, and those who bore a part
In the mad deeds that set the world in flame,
So fret my memory here—ah! is it blame,
That from my eyes the tear is fain to start?
Nay, from no fount impure these drops arise;
'Tis but that sympathy with Adam's race
Which in each brother's history reads its own:
So let the cliffs and seas of this fair place
Be named man's tomb and splendid record-stone,
High hope, pride-stained, the course without the prize.

And when he informs a would-be zealot for the Church that he must "first learn how to hate," we feel, in spite of this earnestness, the essential hollowness of the romanticist revival, which, if it were accepted with full seriousness, would drag us back

into a world which few of us could contemplate without a shudder, a strange and cruel world, the first sight of which led a cultivated Pagan in the fourth century to predict that "a hideous and formless darkness was about to blot out all the beauty of the world." Newman, whose historical essays prove him to have been strangely lacking in the historical sense, could transport himself into the medieval atmosphere without realizing either the barbarism which was the other side of medieval piety, or the grotesque incongruity of introducing such modes of thought into the life of the nineteenth century. His is the poetry of a highly cultivated but fatally isolated *enclave*, banked up by old loyalties and prejudices against the fertilizing flood of living ideas.

The twentieth century has welcomed another Catholic poet, whose short life hardly allowed his powers to reach maturity—Francis Thompson. At the risk of offending some of his admirers, I must state my opinion that no writer of our time has been so extravagantly overestimated. I do not deny that some of his poems show traces of poetic inspiration. But he is bloodless, sexless, and sometimes mawkish. An unpleasant odour of stale incense pervades all his work. Even the sun is "sacerdotal." In autumn "all nature sacerdotal seems." We recall with grim pleasure Mr. A. C. Benson's humorous comparison of a toad waddling along a garden path to a fat priest in a yellow cope,

avoiding that proud knight in armour, the stag-beetle.

Why is it that a type of religion so rich in colour, so luxuriant in fancy, so conscious of a hundred links with a splendid past, should be incapable, in modern times, of producing any poetry of a very high order? If I am not mistaken, the Catholic poetry of the Continent, even in countries where Catholicism exercises an almost unchallenged sway over the religious life of the people, is seldom of high merit. The reason may perhaps be found in that which is the strength of Catholicism—its clear, hard outlines, the precision of its dogmas, and the rigidity of its dialectic. A system which we can *see round* is not good for poetry. Pegasus is harnessed to a heavy waggon-load of ecclesiastical properties. A poet who should cut the reins and fly free would probably fall into heresy, or at least the suspicion of it. And so the very loyalty and enthusiasm for his Church, which is the inspiration of the Catholic poet, limit and cramp him; and when beauty and truth from other sources attract him, he shrinks back, as we have seen, as if in fear of contamination.

The Anglican Church can show, on the whole, a far richer crop of poetry. From the Reformation to the beginning of the Oxford Movement it was a really national Church, reflecting the religion of the English people in its strength and in its limitations. The literature of the Church of England has been scholarly, sane, and yet fervent. I ought, of course,

to begin with my illustrious predecessor in the Deanery of St. Paul's, John Donne. But it is not easy to speak of him as a religious poet. His importance in the history of our literature lies in his bold rebellion against Elizabethan standards. He was the pioneer of new fashions in poetry. I cannot read his religious poems with much pleasure. They do not always ring true, and there is a trace of real morbidity in his imagination. There are other English poets about whom I feel the same hesitation. It was not uncommon for writers of secular poetry to supplement their lighter effusions by pious songs; and they were not least inclined to do this when their earlier poetry, like that of Donne himself, had been rather unedifying. Herrick composed his *Noble Numbers* as an expiation for his "unbaptized rhymes, writ in my wild unhallowed times." Habington, Wither, Marvell, and Cowley are all in the same case. Sidney, however, in his noble sonnet, at the end of which he wrote *Splendidis longum valedico nugis*, gives us an overpowering impression of sincerity, as does Spenser when he wrote:

Many lewd lays, ah woe is me the more, etc.

But it is a result of that characteristic which continental critics too unkindly call our hypocrisy, that several of our poets who have written tolerably well on religious topics are not religious poets. These, therefore, I pass over.

With George Herbert we come to a typically Anglican poet, one of the glories of the Church of England. He might have been a greater poet if he had not had Donne to imitate, but this influence affects only the form of his writing. Herbert is no doubt an ecclesiastic to the finger-tips. As Coleridge says, "the reader of Herbert, if he is to appreciate him thoroughly, must be an affectionate and dutiful child of the Church, and from habit, conviction, or a constitutional predisposition to ceremoniousness in piety as in manner, find her forms and ordinances aids to religion, not sources of formality." Baxter, however, who was not constitutionally disposed to ceremoniousness in piety, and William Cowper were great admirers of Herbert.¹ Cowper lived in an age when men were almost ashamed of praising such unclassical models as Herbert; yet he says of him: "At length I met with Herbert's poems, and, Gothic and uncouth as they were, I yet found in them a strain of piety which I could not but admire. This was the only author I had any delight in reading. I pored over him all day long, and though I found not here what I might have found—a cure for my malady—yet it never seemed so much alleviated as while I was reading him." Coleridge adds that

¹ Baxter says: "I must confess, after all, that next the Scripture Poems there are none so savoury to me as Mr. George Herbert's. Herbert speaks of God like a man that really believeth in God, and whose business in the world is most with God; heart-work and heaven-work make up his book."

Herbert is "an exquisite master of this [what he calls the 'neutral'] style, when the scholar and the poet supplies the material, but the perfect, well-bred gentleman the expressions and arrangement." There is, in truth, something of the courtier in Herbert, with all his gentle piety and humble acceptance of the *fallentis semita vitae*. His unworldliness was of that noble sort which is based on knowledge of the world; not of that unattractive sort which is based on ignorance of the world. He still belongs to the class on whose manners he had turned his back. His piety is not a professional saintliness; he knows and admits things which the complete cleric refuses to recognize, as, for instance, that

A little glory, mixed with humbleness,
Cures both a fever and lethargicness.

In this he is, like all the best Anglican clergymen, the layman's friend and counsellor. Shorthouse is not far wrong when he says that men like Herbert and Nicholas Ferrar are "the true founders of the Church of England." Refinement, good taste, culture, and reserve, with a deep foundation of devout feeling and pure living, are the qualities which we recognize, not without pride, as belonging to this type. The *via media* was then accepted from sheer conviction:

A fine aspect in fit array,
Neither too mean nor yet too gay.

It is an ideal which might be commonplace and colourless in some cases, and so no doubt it often was. But Herbert's poems, which tell the story of his inner life, are the record of a genuine *quest*. The note of personal confession and experience gives his gentle muse a more individual and therefore a more universal power of appeal. It is a living and growing soul which he reveals to us.

Herbert's younger contemporary, Vaughan, after long neglect has been somewhat overpraised. He is often flat, as Herbert never is, and only in a few short passages equals, and now and then surpasses, his master. But as a spiritual interpreter of nature he is above Herbert, who was too introspective to draw much inspiration from the external world. Vaughan's best message is that the fair English country may teach us to know our Creator.

Fresh fields and woods! the earth's fair face,
 God's foot-stool and man's dwelling place,
 I ask not why the first believer
 Did love to be a country liver.

He is particularly good when he sings of the dawn, of running water, and of the effects of light. And he has some very felicitous images, like :

That they, while Thou on both their spoils dost tread,
 May crown thy feet, that could not crown thy head ;

an independent parallel to the beautiful lines of Propertius :

Sic, caput in magnis ubi non est tangere signis
Ponitur hic imos ante corona pedes;

and in the better-known figure of eternity as "a great ring of pure and endless light."

Another Welshman, belonging to the same school as Herbert and Henry Vaughan, is Thomas Traherne, who may be said to have been recently discovered. Like Vaughan, he is a Wordsworthian before Wordsworth. Perhaps his favourite theme is that of Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, which he expounds in the beautiful poem beginning "News from a foreign country came," and in the lines:

No darkness then did overshadow,
But all within was pure and bright;
No guilt did crush, nor fear invade,
But all my soul was full of light.
A joyful sense and purity
Is all I can remember,
The very night to me was bright,
'Twas summer in December.

He gives us his creed in prose as follows: "The riches of invention have made us blind to the riches of nature. The riches of nature are our souls and bodies, with all their faculties, senses, and endowments; and it had been the easiest thing in the whole world to teach me that all felicity consisted in the enjoyment of all the world, that it was prepared for me before I was born, and that nothing was more divine and beautiful."

The eighteenth century, though not so barren in the poetry of religion as is sometimes supposed, has little to add to our gallery of Anglican singers. But the first half of the nineteenth produced one who, with Herbert, is the special glory of the Church of England, another country parson, John Keble. His immense popularity for more than half a century among the class of readers to which he himself belonged is a proof how admirably he represented the Anglicanism of the Victorian age. Like other Victorians, he is now in danger of being unduly neglected, and some of our critics do not take him seriously as a poet. This is, I think, a mistake. His gentle, meditative verse does not appeal to eager spirits; perhaps, to speak the truth, it always appealed much more to women than to men, though certainly not to "the new woman"; but its atmosphere is that of a country parsonage garden on a fine May afternoon, and there are many worse places in which to spend a few hours. There is perhaps not much in Keble that cannot be found expressed with greater force by Wordsworth; but Keble will always live as the chief representative in poetry of a phase of religious thought and practice which beautified many lives and satisfied many pious and gentle hearts.

Another country parson who was a real poet is Charles Tennyson, rector of Grasby in the Wolds, whose fame has been quite eclipsed by that of his illustrious brother. The following sonnet seems to

me admirable for its simple directness of expression and purity of feeling :

O God, impart thy blessing to my cries,
 Tho' I trust deeply, yet I daily err;
 The waters of my heart are oft astir—
 The Angel's there! and yet I cannot rise!
 I wish that Christ were here among us still,
 Proffering his bosom to his servant's brow;
 But oh! that holy voice comes o'er us now
 Like twilight echoes from a distant hill:
 We long for his pure looks and words sublime;
 His lowly-lofty innocence and grace;
 The talk sweet-toned, and blessing all the time.
 The mountain sermon and the ruthless gaze;
 The cheerly credence gathered from his face;
 His voice in village-groups at eve or prime.

The last name to be included in this remarkable list is that of William Barnes, the Dorsetshire poet, whose whole life was spent in the beautiful rural county which is the scene of his poetry. He was for many years rector of Winterbourne Carne, near Dorchester, where he led the life of a model country clergyman, beloved by his parishioners. He wrote in dialect, and this has interfered with his popularity; but his lyrics are, as Mr. Palgrave has said, "among the most varied in subject, the most perfect in form, the purest and sweetest in tone, which our literature contains. Humour and pathos, character and landscape, within the limits of the local sphere which he scarcely quits, each is at his command; of all modern poets he is the most truly and delightfully idyllic."

It is, indeed, a remarkable list—this of the poet-parsons of the Anglican Church. It might have been lengthened by including the names of Crabbe, Milman, and Trench, who have been omitted because Crabbe is hardly a religious poet, while the other two were not parish priests. What I wish to suggest is that the life of the country rectory, with all its intellectual limitations, is favourable to the development of poetic talent. A married clergy, drawn from the best educated section of the upper and upper-middle classes, and scattered over the villages of England, is a peculiarly English institution. Its days are, perhaps, numbered, but, on the whole, it has deserved the generous praise which Lecky bestowed upon it in a well-known passage. There are few places where the ideal of plain living and high thinking, kept in close touch with the prosaic realities of humble life by professional duty, has been more nearly realized than in scores of country parsonages since the Reformation.

Of all religious philosophies Stoicism, and Calvinism, which is simply baptized Stoicism, is the most antipathetic to poetry. Cowper, whom not nature but melancholia turned into a Calvinist, was driven by despair to write the horrible stanzas beginning:

Hatred and vengeance, my eternal portion,
Scarcely enduring stay of execution,
Wait in impatient readiness to seize my
Soul in a moment.

And I do not find the verses of Isaac Watts, in the same metre, much more to my taste.

Hark, the shrill outcries of the guilty wretches!
Lively bright horror and amazing anguish
Stare through their eyelids, while the living worm lies
Gnawing within them.

Thoughts, like old vultures, prey upon their heart-strings,
And the smart twinges, when the eye beholds the
Lofty Judge frowning, and a flood of vengeance
Rolling afore him.

Hopeless immortals! how they scream and shiver,
While devils push them to the pit wide-yawning,
Hideous and gloomy, to receive them headlong
Down to the centre!

Stop here, my fancy; (all away, ye horrid
Doleful ideas!) come, arise to Jesus,
How he sits God-like! and the saints around him
Throned, yet adoring.

O may I sit there when He comes triumphant,
Dooming the nations! then ascend to glory,
While our Hosannas all along the passage
Shout the Redeemer.

We may wonder why our poets have chosen the delicate metre in which the Lesbian poetess enshrined her very unconventional love-affairs, as a vehicle, now of religious delirium, and now (in Canning's *Needy Knife-Grinder*) of political satire. But the English sapphic is really quite a different metre from the Greek.

A very different account must be given of the influence of Platonism upon English religious poetry. What Platonism is, as a spirit in poetry, cannot be explained better than in the words of Professor J. A. Stewart, of Oxford: "Platonism is the mood of one who has a curious eye for the endless variety of this visible and temporal world, and a fine sense of its beauties, yet is haunted by the presence of an invisible and eternal world behind, or, when the mood is most pressing, within the visible and temporal world, and sustaining both it and himself—a world not perceived as external to himself, but inwardly lived by him, as that with which at moments of ecstasy, even habitually, he is become one."¹ This is a description of Nature-mysticism rather than of Platonism; but Platonism is only the philosophy which is implicit in Nature-mysticism. The Platonist fills in the outline by teaching that the soul, in experiencing this vision of the divine and eternal in Nature, is remembering her true home, from which she descended into the world of change; that it is love of home which draws her upwards and gives her wings to escape from this muddy vesture of decay and ascend in heart and mind to the region where are the eternal archetypes of all that is good and fair and true here below; that there is the soul of the world which is the medium of communication between the individual soul and the realm of pure spirit; and that above

¹ *English Literature and the Classics*, p. 26.

the realm of pure spirit there dwells the ineffable Godhead, into whose mysterious presence the "spirit in love" is at rare intervals permitted to penetrate while in a state of trance. Plato himself was many other things beside a prophet of spiritual religion, but it was as a prophet and seer that his influence affected the whole future of philosophical and religious thought. Even in the dark ages, that river did not flow altogether underground, and in Dante it already fertilizes once more those fields of Italy, where the Renaissance was first to spring into flower and fruit. And all through it is a genuine faith, a living interpretation of life, by which men have guided their conduct and moulded their thoughts. It is distinguished from other moods, or other philosophies, by its deep love of this good and beautiful world, combined with a steady rejection of that same world whenever it threatens to conceal instead of revealing the unseen and eternal world behind. The Platonist loves Time, because it is the moving image of Eternity; he loves Nature, because in Nature he beholds Spirit creating after its own likeness. Those who classify Platonism as a dualistic philosophy are fundamentally mistaken. As soon as the seen and unseen worlds fall apart and lose connection with each other, both are dead. Such a severance at once cuts the nerve which makes the Platonist a poet. So long as the angels of thought can pass freely up and down the ladder which leads from earth to heaven, poetry of the highest kind is

implicit in Platonism, whether it finds utterance or not; but so soon as God is banished from earth, and the beauty of form and colour from heaven, both are surrendered to the formless infinite which for Plato is the abode of the evil principle. For this reason, Wordsworth is a truer Platonist than Coleridge or Shelley. During the twenty years or so in which he was really inspired, the earth and every common sight seemed to him apparelled in celestial light, and he was able to translate something of the splendid vision into words which enable his readers to see it too. Coleridge's mind was, as Wordsworth said of him, "debarred from Nature's living images" by the predominance in it of romantic fancies, and his tendency to "dream dreams" instead of "seeing visions." The same is true of Shelley; his Platonism is based, partly at least, on his acceptance of the philosophy of Plato and Plotinus, while Wordsworth's was inborn and untaught. We may compare Shelley's fine stanza:—

The One remains, etc.,

with Wordsworth's self-revelations in the *Prelude*, or the *Lines composed above Tintern Abbey*, about

The sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things;

and we shall then realize how much more intimately felt is Wordsworth's vision of the divine in and behind Nature.

Wordsworth is the greatest of our religious poets—not in his later days, as a Tory and a Churchman, but in his grand period, from 1798 to 1820. At that time he really saw and felt what he afterwards remembered and tried to revive—the presence of the living soul of the world:

The great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
Spirit knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
It circulates, the soul of all the world.

This is not "natural" but spiritual religion. The poet had to struggle to win it, for in this quest there is no illumination without self-purification by discipline; but his reward was such serene happiness as that of the land of Beulah in Bunyan's allegory, which was "beyond the valley of the shadow of death, and out of reach of Giant Despair."

Such, too, was the happiness of Henry More, a Platonist whose mind was not very unlike Wordsworth's. Of him it was said that "he enjoyed his Maker in all the parts of the universe, and saw the marks both of his counsel and benignity in all. Nay, he was transported with wonder as well as pleasure even in the contemplation of those things that are here below. He hath been heard to say,

‘A good man could be sometimes ready, in his own private reflections, to kiss the very stones of the street.’ ”

I have left myself no time for the mystics, Quarles, whom I do not value very greatly, and Blake, whom I dare not try to appraise in a single sentence. Christina Rossetti deserves a place beside Herbert and Keble. In some notes of tender pathos she is quite unsurpassed.

Nor can I speak of our newer guides, Browning and Mèredith, though they, too, are religious poets and teachers. The field is far too wide to be covered in one paper. I hope I have brought enough evidence to show that in this as in other ways English poetry is representative of English character and genius. With all our faults, we have never forgotten God, and we have sought Him where He is most surely to be found—in the life of nature and in the mind of man.

II

SCIENTIFIC ETHICS

BEING THE THIRD ANNUAL NORMAN LOCKYER
LECTURE

Delivered to the British Science Guild

My object in this lecture is to consider, so far as is possible in a single hour, what are the main changes which the Age of Science, in which we are living, has brought, is bringing, or ought to bring, in the region of moral ideals and practical conduct.

The great man in whose honour this Lecture was founded was an astronomer. Of his permanent contributions to science it is not for me to speak. To an outsider like myself, who reads the less technical books on astronomy and physics, eager to learn the latest results without losing himself in mathematical calculations which he is unable to follow, theories which were but lately accepted seem to be again in the melting pot, and science may be on the verge of some momentous discovery, comparable to the revelations associated with the names of Copernicus and Galileo at the Renaissance, and of Darwin in the nineteenth century. The next discoveries in physics may be even more revolutionary, and may bring more weal or woe to

humanity, than these. Meanwhile, the physical and astronomical theories of thirty and even of twenty years ago are being revised, and the very greatest names in those sciences will live in history as those of pioneers. This is the condition of every progressive study, and those who in their generation have carried forward the frontiers of knowledge would not have it otherwise. But some great men of the last generation showed remarkable prescience. I have lately read in Professor Eddington's *Stars and Atoms*, which I suppose is at present the last word on astronomy, that Sir Norman Lockyer strongly opposed the then prevalent view that the red stars are always the oldest and the nearest to extinction; "to a considerable extent," says Professor Eddington, "he anticipated the more modern view that some of the red stars are among the youngest members of the stellar community." His famous dictum that "the hotter star, the more simple its spectrum," has also, I believe, stood the test of time.

Astronomy seems at first sight to be far removed from ethical problems. The philosophy of astronomy is cosmocentric. The astronomer is the spectator of all time and all existence. He may well ask, "What is man, that we should be mindful of him?"

But I cannot agree that astronomy and astrophysics have nothing to teach the moralist. The true man of science, as Havelock Ellis has said, is an artist, who, as was said of Wren, uses the stuff of science as his material. "There is no such thing as

an unimaginative scientific man," said a great mathematician. Now the imagination, if we may believe Wordsworth, is Reason in its most exalted mood. The man of science, the philosopher, and the religious genius, are all alike creative artists, interpreting to us the values of the world of knowledge and experience. One of the most wonderful discoveries of astrophysics is that the whole universe, including ourselves, is all of one piece, woven on the same loom. It is constructed of the same elements and obeys the same laws, which it is the glory of the human mind to discover. Each new scientific discovery, especially in the domain of astronomy, exalts human nature in humbling it. It gives fresh proof of the amazing power of the mind to extend its survey to the furthest confines of space, and the remotest periods of time. Each new discovery opens new avenues to thought, adds new splendours to kindle the imagination, and assuredly imposes upon us new responsibilities. If we believe in God, we may be sure that no revelation is made merely to gratify idle curiosity; if we are agnostics, we probably arrive at the same conclusion by a different road.

My subject to-day is the ethics, not the religion, of science. But the two are closely connected; and since the view of science is not anthropocentric, it cannot regard morals apart from their foundation in the laws which govern all existence. This is to set morals in a framework of natural philosophy.

It is therefore to be expected that the scientific view of the universe will come in conflict with some quasi-religious views belonging to a pre-scientific age, which have been current in the past.

Among the quasi-religious conceptions which have been ruled out by the progress of science are the puny scale of geocentric cosmology, which was of course antiquated centuries ago, though the popular imagination has been slow to realize the truth; and the intolerably cramped span of time which traditional belief allowed to the human race, and to the universe itself. And here we may observe that the time-vista of reality has been greatly extended quite lately. The time-scale of Helmholtz and Kelvin, even before it was refuted, was treated by the younger generation with no more respect than Archbishop Usher's chronology; and now we are told that our earth may be nearly two thousand million years old, and the sun perhaps seven or eight billion. We may also dismiss the idea of an imminent end of the present world-order, a notion which had a great and on the whole an unfortunate influence upon early Christian thought, and which still lingers in some religious circles. A catastrophe is always possible, but the chances seem to be that our race has perhaps even a million more years in which to try every possible and impossible social experiment. Professor Jeans has lately suggested that our system may be the youngest baby in the whole universe. This is a change of scale which obviously

has some ethical significance. We must also accommodate our eschatology to a view of the universe which leaves no room for a geographical heaven and hell. The difficulties which this change involves for theology are considerable, though not, I believe, insurmountable. Science has, in my opinion, done much to purify and exalt the conception which those who believe in God must henceforth form of Him. So Oliver Wendell Holmes writes:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
 As the swift seasons roll
 Leave thy low-vaulted past!
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
 Till thou at length art free,
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

The religion of the future must get rid of these pre-scientific survivals; but the task will be more difficult than it may appear to the scientific student. For religion is a climbing plant, which always winds itself round something other than itself. Even obsolete science may be a useful prop, not easily dispensed with. Moreover, let the naturalist remember that Kant, like the author of the Eighth Psalm, found *two* things worthy of awe and reverence—the starry heavens and the mind of men. We cannot build a religion upon naturalism alone; and there is no reason for supposing that a deeper revelation of ultimate truth is given us through inanimate

Nature than through the affirmations of the human soul and spirit. "The throne of the Godhead is the mind of man."

Let us now come to closer quarters with ethical problems. The impression which the universe as depicted by modern science makes upon the imagination is incomparably magnificent, but to many minds it is terrible and cruel. The mere idea of "Vastness" was appalling to Tennyson, though it was sublime to Victor Hugo. The idea of unending cyclical movement—of stars and planets being born and dying and born again for ever and ever—an ancient theory which may perhaps again come into favour, in spite of the second law of thermodynamics—is repugnant to some thinkers, who are wedded to the belief in some kind of infinite progress in the whole. But it is in natural history and zoology that the loudest protests are made against ascribing the immeasurable wastefulness and callous cruelty of Nature's methods to a good God. I have never seen this familiar point driven in more forcibly than in the third chapter of J. H. Curle's striking book, *To-day and To-morrow*. I think it must be admitted that this exposure of Nature's cruelty, even amid scenes which to the superficial observer seem purely beautiful and gracious, has occasionally been urged in self-justification by men who are prone by nature to ruthlessness in politics or sociology. Humane thinkers like John Stuart Mill and Huxley have shrunk from the idea that Nature's methods

should be a model for human action. Mill tended towards the semi-Manichean doctrine, that God has only a restricted power over Nature; and Huxley, in his famous Romanes lecture, spoke of the duty of "resisting the cosmic process."

Huxley saw that the humanitarian movement which is an integral part of modern civilization inhibits and counteracts the operation of natural selection upon the human race. But he was convinced that natural selection alone has evolved the improvement of our species, and that without it there is no possibility of maintaining the gains already won, still less of securing a further advance. Hence he found himself in a very troublesome dilemma. He wrote: "I have termed this evolution of the feelings out of which the primitive bonds of human society are so largely forged, into the organized and personified sympathy we call conscience, the ethical process. So far as it tends to make any human society more efficient in the struggle for existence with the state of nature or with other societies, it works in harmonious contrast with the cosmic process. But it is none the less true that since law and morals are restraints upon the struggle for existence between men in society, the ethical process is in opposition to the principle of the cosmic process, and tends to the suppression of the qualities best fitted for success in that struggle." "Cosmic nature is no school of virtue, but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical

nature." "The cosmos works through the lower nature of man, not for righteousness, but against it."

I should describe this as radical pessimism. How can man hope to resist the cosmic process? It is a veritable *Ragnarok*, a twilight of the Gods, in which, as in the Scandinavian mythology, the Titans are to have a final victory over the Powers of good. We find echoes of this view of nature in other thinkers. To Santayana, Nature is the blind and blameless giant, in whom we may find instruments to use in the service of the Ideal, but certainly no inspiration or moral guidance. Schopenhauer taught that there is an irreducible contradiction, not so much between the cosmic process and ethics, as between the interests of the race and those of the individual. Nature dangles before us various deceptive baits, of which the passion of love is the most insidious, in order to get her hook in our nose, and force us to subserve purposes which are not our own. He prided himself on having exposed this trickery, and exhorted his fellow-men to frustrate the designs of Nature by abolishing the Will to Live. In race-suicide he saw an escape from the worst of all possible worlds.

But are we really obliged to give up the comforting faith that "the universe is friendly?" I think this outbreak of pessimism is a reaction against the untenable and superstitious doctrine of progress which, after germinating in that factory of poisonous delusions, the brain of Rousseau, deeply infected

the science of the nineteenth century, spoiling the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, and injuring that of Darwin himself. We have now learned that evolution is not always from the worse to the better. Adaptations may fit an organism for a lower environment; the primrose path of parasitism has tempted one species after another to degradation and retrogression. In human affairs, too, there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end of it is death. Still, in the long run it is wiser to be a sheep than a wolf, if we want our posterity to survive. If we take long views, it is by no means certain that it pays to be anti-social. The cosmic process is a very dubious ally of brutality.

But the main error is to consider the cosmic process apart from man. As Carveth Read says, "To cast human affairs out of the realm of Nature is to destroy the system of the world, to despiritualize Nature, and to dismiss man to some limbo of the unnatural." The cosmic process is responsible for man as he is, with all his unselfish devotion to family, friends, and country, all his pity and sympathy with the weak, all his idealism and belief in the unseen, as well as for those brute-instincts (Aristotle's *theoriotēs*), which Read thinks are too often forgotten by moralists and reformers. We are not committed to anything so hopeless as a struggle against the cosmic process. The power which implanted the higher instincts in us is able and willing to satisfy them out of its own stores.

But the question remains whether the study of Nature, which after all is of one texture throughout, encourages us to believe that the object of the Creator is to "minimize pain," as the dying Jeremy Bentham requested his doctor to do, thus coining a useful word with his last breath. It seems to me that in our corner of the world more importance has been attached to the mere diminution of suffering than the nature of things allows. I am not even sure that "the sanctity of human life" is a sentiment which can appeal to Nature as we know it. Christianity has never been afraid either to die or to kill, for sufficient reasons. The main question is whether we have any right to demand sacrifices from the present generation for the sake of those who are to come after. The greatest happiness of the greatest number is a sound criterion, if we remember that by far the greatest number are not yet in existence. The politician remembers only that the unborn have no votes; scientific morality can never forget that they have rights. To this subject I must return presently.

I will not be so sanguine as to predict with confidence that the increasing acquaintance with the methods and results of scientific research will have much influence upon public opinion. I hope it will be so, and I think it probably will be so. The various branches of science at present enlist the acutest brains and the most disinterested enthusiasms of our time. In the hands of these men, knowledge is

progressing as it is in no other field. Discoveries are being made which affect our whole view of reality, discoveries which enthrall the imagination and stimulate keen curiosity. These studies, in short, enjoy a prestige which is certain to increase, and speak with an authority which no political or religious party can afford to disregard. And yet science has many enemies. We seem to have left far behind the days when Bishop Wilberforce made fun of Darwinism in the presence of Huxley, and paid the penalty. But the vagaries of the Fundamentalists in the South and West of the United States show that the Mosaic cosmogony still has its defenders; the editors of our daily papers know that what the Americans call Fundamentalism is still a live issue for many of their readers. There has been a marked recrudescence of superstition since the Great War, chiefly perhaps among the half-educated rich. Miraculous cures, necromancy, and other forms of supernaturalism have now more adherents than in the last century. These things are disquieting; they ought to remind us that any progress which is not based on an intrinsic advance in human intelligence is very precarious.

Scientific morality must also count on the persistent hostility of Roman Catholicism, which will pass no coins that do not bear the stamp of its own mint. Finally, it is heartily disliked by the sentimental humanitarians, who are kind only to be cruel, and ignored by politicians, as having no

relation to the next election. These are heavy handicaps; but I think truth will gradually prevail. Two generations hence it may be possible to trace several changes in public opinion which are directly due to the influence of the scientific spirit. In the remainder of this lecture I wish to suggest a few of these changes. They include some positive contributions to ethics, which the younger among us may hope to see widely accepted before we die.

(1) We may expect to see a more exacting standard of accuracy in forming and expressing opinions. Increasing familiarity with statistics will drive out some absurd opinions which are widely held. History has already become so scientific, that Professor Trevelyan was moved to protest, in a brilliant essay, that Clio is still a Muse, and that a narrative of events may be accurate without being deliberately dull. He has himself set a good example of how, in a scientific age, history may be and ought to be written. Even in controversial theology, in those Churches which are affected by the scientific conscience, there is much less garbling of facts and vilification of opponents than there used to be. We have only to compare the ethics of controversy among Protestants with the methods still adopted by Churches which will have no dealings with science, to realize how much improvement there has been already in truthfulness and good manners.

(2) The belief in God belongs rather to religion than to ethics. But the two cannot be separated.

“Such as men themselves are, such will God appear to them to be”; and, conversely, the character which we attribute to God will necessarily affect our ideas of right and wrong. Science on the whole remains agnostic about the existence of a personal Deity. For my own part, I think that even purely scientific problems about the nature of ultimate reality are most plausibly answered on the theistic hypothesis; but I cannot discuss this question now. Science gives no clear answer as to whether we should believe in a personal God or not; but it has a very clear conviction that if there is a personal God, He is not at all like what many religious believers have supposed Him to be. If there is a God, He is certainly not like a capricious Oriental Sultan, from whom favours may be obtained by making friends with his courtiers. He is not a magnified Schoolmaster, distributing marks and prizes and punishments. And He is certainly not the Head of the clerical profession. Sir John Seeley, in his *Natural Religion*, said that the man of science worships a nobler God than the average churchgoer; and I think he was right. It is quite as important that we should have worthy thoughts about the Creator of the universe, as that we should feel sure of His existence. Without trespassing further on the field of the philosophy of religion, I will say that though science by itself can never lead us to the God of religion—since science deliberately confines itself to the quantitative relations of objects, leaving on

one side those qualitative aspects of reality which are the special subjects of religion—science may negatively perform a great service to religion by ruling out those lower religious conceptions which do far more harm to true religion than the assaults of dogmatic atheism. The scientist will accept no form of theism which does not seem to him good enough to be true. His severe requirements are fatal to a number of popular beliefs which are really both unethical and dishonouring to the Deity.

(3) On the relation of God to the world there is one widely accepted theory which is above all others intolerable to science. This is the theory of supernaturalistic dualism—the theory of two orders, the natural and the supernatural order, dovetailed into each other on the same plane. It is on this theory that the belief in occasional miraculous interventions rests. If this were accepted, it would throw the whole of science into confusion, by suggesting two possible and quite disparate causes for every event. As I have said elsewhere, if an outbreak of cholera in a town may be due either to an infected water supply or to the blasphemies of an infidel mayor, it would be difficult to decide whether the proper remedy was to overhaul the drainage or to carry a wonder-working doll through the streets. Perhaps nothing has corrupted the Christian religion so profoundly as the unethical magic which in many different forms has pervaded it; and it all rests on this assumption that there is a

"supernatural order," which from time to time "suspends" the laws of Nature, breaking the natural sequence of cause and effect. The priests have claimed that they have the privilege of setting this supernatural machinery in motion. The New Testament preaches a sounder ethical doctrine. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." "Be not deceived; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap." Science is quite explicit that we are always sowing our future, and always reaping our past. We may learn in time that we have to pay our debts to God as well as to man.

I hope that the scientific conscience will win a great victory by driving into limbo that mass of half-beliefs which we call superstitions. It is a big thing to ask; for superstition is as old as man himself, and will not be cast out without a strenuous resistance. But what a shameful and discreditable thing it is to see an otherwise intelligent person refusing to sit down to dinner as one of thirteen, objecting to be married in May, or "touching wood" if he has said anything "unlucky." Do people believe these things or not? They do not know themselves. At the back of their minds there is a half-conscious urge not to violate a taboo. "There may be something in it." We might suppose that a man who believes in a God who will punish him for getting married in May must be a pure savage in religion. But this would be to underestimate the

irrationality of human nature, whenever a primitive racial instinct is in question. Nevertheless, disbelief in law and order in the spiritual world, whatever form it takes, is bound to have a prejudicial effect on morality. It leads, among other things, to the superstitions of the gambler, who cannot give up the idea that he may get "luck" on his side. Students of science are wholly free from these superstitions. It follows that a scientific education is really able to root out these atavistic fancies, which link the civilized European to the men of the stone age.

Supernaturalism has a specially happy hunting-ground in the treatment of disease. Here again science is in conflict with the practice of many thousands of years. The combination of magic with medical treatment forms a large part of the history of medicine. Unfortunately, in the past medical science has been so empirical and so unskilful, that the sorcerers have often had the best of the argument. For instance, Sir Kenelm Digby in the seventeenth century invented what he called sympathetic powder, which was to be applied to the weapon which had caused the wound. As the accredited method was to pour boiling oil into the wound, to counteract the poison of the lead, it is not surprising that Sir Kenelm's patients, who were left severely alone, often did better than those who fell into the hands of the army surgeons. It is still uncertain how far suggestion, thoroughly believed in by the

patient, may be beneficial even in some diseases which could not be diagnosed as hysterical. The only way to defeat the army of quacks, lay and clerical, is to place faith-healing once for all on a scientific basis. It ought soon to be possible for an experienced doctor to tell his patient positively whether he can cure himself by auto-suggestion, or whether his case demands surgical or other treatment. The quacks, whether they are the priests of Lourdes, or humbler practitioners of curious arts, flourish only because the laws which regulate healing are imperfectly known. In the same way, psycho-analysis may be freed from the prurient imaginings of Freud and his school, and used in a manner which may lift burdens from many minds; for undoubtedly there is a great deal of truth at the back of it.

(4) The whole tendency of science, whether medical or social, is to attend to causes rather than symptoms, and this has a far-reaching importance in morals. In particular, the rational treatment of children, which has already made immense progress from the stupid barbarity of a hundred years ago, is capable of still further development. The scientific study of the child is a fascinating subject which has never been taken in hand before our time. In social questions the same principle would be much more freely applied if it were not considered necessary to give constant sops to Cerberus, under the specious name of social reform.

(5) The ethical implications of Darwin's discoveries in the origin of species have hardly yet been fully recognized. I mean that the certainty that the lower animals are literally our distant cousins, ought to make some change in our attitude towards them. In the South of Europe, where the doctrine of evolution from simpler forms has not yet been allowed to percolate into the minds of the people, it is still common to see animals wantonly ill-treated, and to hear in reply to any remonstrance the plea: "They are not Christians," or "They were made for our use and have no rights." Those who have tried to organize public opinion against such cruelties as tearing the wings of egrets from the living birds, or killing the parent-birds during the breeding season, have found to their surprise that they can get very little help or sympathy from the greatest of Christian Churches. The more enlightened feeling of Northern Europe is a proof that science has already had a considerable influence in modifying ethical ideals, except where it is deliberately excluded. The strongest indignation against the ill-usage of animals is shown by independent moralists, but Protestantism is distinctly, though rather haltingly, on the right side.

It is not likely that the feeling of kinship with other animals will go so far as to stop the consumption of animal food. There are some who, like the ancient Pythagoreans, regard the eating of flesh as a kind of cannibalism; but vegetarianism

will probably remain a fad of the few. After all, nobody has so much interest in the demand for pork as the pig. What is likely to change is the popular attitude towards field sports. Once again, we have to deal with a very primitive instinct. Man was a hunter before he was a tiller of the ground, and long before he began to study natural science. Still, the large majority of men in civilized countries get on without hunting, as they get on without fighting and ritual dances. These things may afford a certain purgation of the emotions, as Aristotle would say, and this may account for the exhilaration which they cause; but they are not among the necessities of life. The killing of birds and beasts for the pleasure of killing them is mainly an aristocratic diversion. No one probably has seen for the first time a hare or a pheasant shot without a feeling of pity and disgust; but these are emotions which wear off very quickly, and the average sportsman, it may be, is not satisfying his lust for cruelty at all, but merely testing his skill as a marksman. The amusement is supposed to be that of a gentleman, and of a gentleman with means; it is also healthy, giving plenty of exercise in the open air. But in view of what we now know of our relationship to other forms of life, it seems a barbarous and degrading form of recreation. I believe that this view will gain ground steadily, and that the most indefensible forms of sport, such as pigeon-shooting and coursing, will be given up in deference

to public opinion. If the Spaniards ever give up bull-fighting, it will be a sign that they are no longer inaccessible to the ethics of science.

The lower animals were not made for our sake. So much science can affirm without hesitation. And it is equally certain that this world was not made for our sake. During the last few thousand years out of the two thousand millions during which the globe has been in existence, an insignificant fraction of the life of the planet, our species has become dominant on the land, though, be it remembered, not below the surface of the sea. During the last few thousand years we have been able to enslave, kill, and eat all those of our fellow-creatures whom we could use in these ways; and we have done it ruthlessly. Whether the tyranny of mankind over the world will go on for ever, none can tell. We may perish by mutual extermination, or some new microbe may make an end of us, or climatic changes may drive us out of a great portion of our present abodes. On the other hand, we may evolve, both physically and mentally, in ways which no one can predict. Meanwhile, the lower animals, if they could devise a religion, would certainly represent the devil as a great white man.

But within the last hundred and fifty years we have been committing a new crime. We have been utterly defacing the surface of the planet, ravaging its natural resources, destroying some beautiful species, which, once gone, can never be replaced,

and generally behaving like ill-conditioned savages. I call this a new crime, because until the industrial revolution in George III's reign, the presence of man probably added more to the beauty of the world than it took away from it. But now the destruction both of natural beauty and of natural wealth goes on apace. The vulgarity of the modern town discharges itself over the whole country. Hideous allotments and bungaloid growths make the approaches to any city repulsive; and what can we say of the reckless expenditure of coal and oil for the benefit of our spendthrift present generation? The approaching failure of the petroleum supplies will bring about great changes.

Will science be able to plead the cause of natural beauty, and make it a moral obligation to prevent the barbarous destruction of beautiful forms of life? And will it plead the cause of posterity, pointing out that to squander the resources of the planet in a few generations is not the part of the "heirs of all the ages," who ought to consider themselves trustees for those who are to come after? There are various ways in which science ought to be able to correct the exaggerated anthropocentrism of ordinary thought. It may even lead us to think with Aristotle that "there are many things in the universe more divine than man."

(6) The long view which science is bound to take must alter considerably our judgments as to the relative importance of things that are happening.

The condition of the world a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand years hence is as important as its condition to-day or to-morrow. The processes which are shaping the nations of the future are now in operation, but it may be that they are not those which attract most attention. I will take an example from the United States, which has lately formed and carried out a momentous decision to close the country against immigrants, a decision which was the direct consequence of earnest warnings from two or three patriotic men of science, who fortunately had the gift of an extremely telling and vigorous style.

All through the century which ended with the Great War, America had been filling up rapidly, at first in consequence of a very high birth-rate, and subsequently by immigration. The Americans prided themselves on offering their country as an asylum for all who wished to come, and the employers of labour revelled in an abundance of cheap workers from different countries who could not combine against them. All were satisfied except the eugenists, who, when the war broke out, were becoming deeply alarmed. In the second decade of this century 77·2 per cent. of the immigrants belonged to the Latin, Slav, and other races who resist assimilation, and only 22·8 per cent. from the Nordic nations, who readily amalgamate with the old Americans. And this was not all. Just as, in accordance with Gresham's Law, bad money drives

good money out of circulation, so the cheap labour of the immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe displaced American labour. The old American families, elbowed out of their own homes, ceased to keep up their numbers. The effect of unrestricted immigration was not so much to increase the population, as to substitute an inferior type of human beings for the old American stock. What was in progress was a peaceful conquest of the country by aliens. In a hundred years the American people, the descendants of the old colonists, would be completely swamped and lost in a miscellaneous crowd of South Italians, Russians, Austrians, Polish Jews, Greeks, and Armenians. The specialists who called the attention of the American people to the fate which hung over them—Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard were the most prominent among them—proved their case by statistics, and soon convinced their countrymen that very drastic and immediate action was necessary. This is an example of the way in which scientific men may sway the destiny of nations by showing the ultimate tendency of movements which for the time may seem to be working well. America has stopped the stream of immigration almost entirely, and has decided that those who are henceforth to be allowed to enter are to come mainly from the Nordic and Protestant peoples. The measure was politically and racially wise, but economically it was premature, as has been shown

by the rush of French Canadians and Mexicans, who are not excluded, into the States.

The Americans are more ready than we are to listen to the advice of science. Eugenics there is almost a part of their religion. In a great many States they have even adopted a very extreme eugenic measure, by sterilizing persons who are thought to be specially undesirable parents. Over 6,000 operations of this kind have been already performed, the majority of them in California. I am not myself in favour of advocating this measure, which in this country would be rejected with indignation; but the case is interesting as showing that scientific legislation is not so hopelessly impossible in America as it seems to be at home. Other laws which are in force in different parts of the world require a health certificate before a marriage is sanctioned, and extend the liberty of divorce partly on eugenic grounds. However discouraging the immediate prospect may be in a land of incorrigible sentimentalists like England, it is the manifest duty of those who understand the supreme importance of preventing the degradation of the national type, to go on attempting to educate their fellow-countrymen. There are signs that the efforts of these enlightened patriots have already borne some fruit.

The new morality will have nothing to do with the old saying: "Where God sends mouths, He sends meat." We cannot throw on the Deity the

responsibility for bringing unwanted children into the world, and leaving them to the State to clothe, feed, and support by outdoor relief. The morality of birth-control depends on the motive. The good citizen wants to do his best for his children and for his country. If he has reason to think that his children are not likely to be healthy in body or mind, or if it is plain that there is no longer room for large families in the class or the nation to which he belongs, it is his duty to act in accordance with that knowledge. Of course, he must take into account the risk of inferior immigrants coming in and filling the places which over-prudent Englishmen have left vacant. This, as I have said, is what has happened in the United States, and we cannot view without grave apprehension the unrestricted influx of low-grade Irish into Liverpool, Glasgow, and the West of Scotland generally. The danger is greatly increased now that America will no longer admit the Southern Irish. It is perhaps too much to hope that any Government will penalize the slum-dwellers who still produce large families to add new burdens to the rates. But we ought to remember that this dysgenic selection by the disproportionate multiplication of the waste products of civilization is a new thing. It is only in the last two generations that the survival rate of the slums has been much higher than that of the middle class and the skilled artisans. This is the conclusive answer to Whitehead's optimistic argument that dysgenic selection has

always been in operation, and yet mankind has progressed. The present state of things is unexampled, and the results are certain to be disastrous. The miserable physique of our town population is without a parallel in Europe; it astonished the French when they saw our "bantam" regiments. In fact, the physique both of French and Germans is now superior to that of the whole British nation taken together, though the upper-class Englishman is still a very fine animal.

Some of the changes which I have enumerated are not closely connected with ethical principles; but others point to a new decalogue dictated not by an inspired law-giver but by science. I firmly believe that it is more Christian than the moral traditions of the pre-scientific age. The Sermon on the Mount contains very sound eugenic doctrine. The care of the Creator for the lower animals is asserted by Christ: "No sparrow falls to the ground without My Father." It was He who pointed out that a field of lilies is a much more beautiful object than a King or Emperor in his robes of state. It is a Christian principle that attention should be given, not to overt acts, but to the state of mind from which they proceed. "Make the tree corrupt, and the fruit will be corrupt." Science is also at one with the Gospel in affirming that very many of the evils of life, both social and individual, arise from indulging the instincts, whether of sensual gratification or of

acquisitiveness or of pugnacity, beyond their biological ends.

Is it possible to define the goal which science will set before itself in furthering the progress of the human race? It seems to me that there are two possible ideals, each of them worthy of admiration, between which it may seem at first sight that a choice must be made. The first will bid us aim at the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The second will rather seek to make mankind as perfect as it is capable of becoming. The first is the formula of the Utilitarians, against whom it has been objected that happiness is qualitative and incapable of quantitative measurement. But from our present point of view their chief fault has been that they have not made up their minds whether "the greatest number" means the greatest number of those now alive, or the greatest number of all who shall hereafter be born. The latter alone is an ideal worthy of science; and whereas the more limited application of the principle is plainly incompatible with the eugenic ideal, the more extended interpretation is not necessarily so. It is not necessarily so, if by happiness we mean well-being, and not merely pleasure. We cannot admit that we should promote happiness in the true sense by reducing men to contented farm-yard animals, or Lotus-eaters, or helpless, fragile creatures like the Eloi in Wells's *Time Machine*. Happiness, from the point of view of science, must not be purchased at the price of

degeneracy, still less of parasitism. It would then cease to be happiness in any worthy sense of the word. I think we may even say that the ideal of science is not happiness at all, but health; only we may add that health is a prime condition of happiness.

Of course, this leaves open the question which Nietzsche raised with such scorn and fury—whether we ought not to aim at the perfection of the élite, at the cost of sacrificing the mass who are incapable of being elevated. It is almost the old question between aristocracy and democracy. I am not prepared to vote for either without qualification; but since aristocracies always tend to die out, I think the wise eugenist will aim at raising the intrinsic quality of the whole population, whether or not it may seem desirable to segregate an A1 class by more careful selection.

You will remember a striking picture by Dürer, called (as he spells it) "Melencolia." It represents Civilization sitting pensively among the symbols of her successes, and doubting whether it has not all been a mistake. Many scientific men have felt the same doubt. Civilization—the accumulation of experience and of tools—seems to have brought intrinsic evolution to an end. Civilized man is losing his natural weapons, and his brain is no bigger than that of his probable ancestors 20,000 years ago, whose skulls are occasionally found in French caves. The complete mechanization of life

which is now in progress is converting the handy man of the past into a mere cog in a machine. His work in life is to screw a single peg 5,000 times a day. Austin Freeman has shown how utterly helpless he would be without his machine; how unlike the despised African savage, who can make a boat or a rain-proof hut in a single day. We know that Nature takes away organs that are not used; and what organs are used by the "skilled" and well-paid machine-tender in Ford's works? It is no wonder that Edward Carpenter described civilization (the word, by the way, is less than two centuries old!) as "a kind of disease through which the various races of men have to pass," though, he added, they usually die of it. Eucken says: "The increase of civilization is not synonymous with an increase of happiness. So far as its effect on human comfort is concerned, civilization seems to be injurious rather than beneficial; it gives rise to unlimited desires, and demands unspeakable effort and labour; it surrounds us with perplexities, cares, and excitements, it hems us in with rigid limitations, it calls for obedience and sacrifice. That all this tends to make life smoother and more pleasurable can hardly be maintained. More comfort is far more likely to be found, and man is far more likely to be contented on lower levels of civilization; moreover, individuals of lower susceptibility will secure this comfort far sooner than those who are more sensitive. If contented and

agreeable existence were the highest good, how greatly we civilized men should envy the careless ease of the Brazilian negro!" In the most highly industrialized centres, we seem to move in a Sahara of the highest intellect. Things are in the saddle, and rule mankind. Men are becoming the slaves of machinery, and, as Homer says, slavery takes away half a man's manhood.

It seems to me that science ought to advocate a return to much simpler conditions. A happy and healthy country would be inhabited—much more sparsely than England is at present—by a population mainly agricultural, with small towns well supplied with schools, colleges, and laboratories. The passion for production at all costs would die a natural death, since the market for standardized products, now artificially stimulated by all the arts of scientific advertising, would be comparatively small. There would not be much of mere drudgery, for we should still have our labour-saving machines; but the arts and crafts would not be strangled and exterminated as they often are now. The instinct of acquisitiveness has become a positive disease; it should be checked by the principle already enunciated, that no needs should be indulged beyond their biological justification. No one should be condemned to the ceaseless repetition of one simple act, as his life's work; the human frame and nervous system are not adapted to such unrelieved monotony. It is the dullness and irritation of

mechanical labour that drive men to alcohol, gambling, and Bolshevism. The cultivation of bodily perfection should be encouraged far more than it is with us; the Germans are already aware of the value of gymnastics and open-air exercises in a state of nature. Surén's book, *Man and Sunshine*, should be in the hands of medical men.

I think, then, that the "mens sana in corpore sano" gives science a satisfactory standard for its moral and social activities. I will call your attention to a remarkable paragraph near the end of Havelock Ellis's *The Dance of Life*. He says that civilizations, in spite of the dangers which they bring with them, have been able to persist for many centuries because men in societies have found methods of combating the exaggerated development of the possessive instinct by retaining it within bounds. These methods become embodied in religious and moralities and laws. They react in concert to restrain cupidity. They make virtues of temperance and abnegation. They appeal to supernatural hopes and fears. So societies are able to immunize themselves against auto-intoxication by the acquisitive instinct, and the services thus rendered by religion cannot be too highly estimated. But now these sanctions are growing weak, being based partly on illusory beliefs, and we need an autonomous instinct to take their place. This Havelock Ellis finds in the aesthetic instinct or faculty.

I cannot wholly agree. The aesthetic faculty is only one of the three great disinterested instincts which deliver the mind from the tyrannies of sense and of selfishness. The other two are the pure love of knowledge which animates the man of science, the scholar, and the philosopher; and the ideal of moral goodness and purity which, in its highest form, determines the character of the saint. These three ideals shine as a triple star. They are independent, in so far that none of the three can be used as a mere means to either of the others; but they are so far connected that none of the three can be totally neglected without injury to the quest of the others. It is quite true that the advance of knowledge, and what we may call the maturity of the human spirit, have made it necessary that these three instincts should be more autonomous, and more clearly defined in their scope, than was possible in the childhood of humanity. This autonomy is in our power; but there is always some risk that those who have specialized in the quest of the Good, or the Beautiful, or the True, may be tempted to undervalue the contribution made by the two others. Science must recognize that it cannot convert man to the higher life alone. Religion and Art are necessary allies.

I will end with two quotations, the first from Carveth Read, in praise of the disinterested intellectual life, which, like the ancients, he calls philosophy. It is an encomium on one of the three

great quests, not the one selected by Havelock Ellis. "All that Aristotle says of the philosophic life is true, namely, that it is the exercise of that which is highest in our nature, and concerned with the highest things, the being and laws of the universe; that it is a more enduring activity than any other; that it gives the purest enjoyment to those who sufficiently practise it; that it is less dependent than any other pursuit upon external conditions. More than anything else, it is its own end and reward; it is the noblest occupation of that leisure in which human life perfects itself. Such are Aristotle's sublime reflections upon his own vocation; for the most part as true now as ever they were."

My other quotation is from Huxley, who thus sets forth the aims of his own career: "To promote the increase of natural knowledge, and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction, which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind, except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is, when the garment of make-believe, by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features, is stripped off."

Let these two citations be my closing tribute to the great man in whose honour this Lecture was founded. May I say before I sit down that the Christian Church, as represented by its more in-

telligent members, who do not take their cue from Dayton, Tennessee, is not nearly so unsympathetic towards science, nor so unwilling to learn from it, as it was when Huxley put his lance in rest against Bishop Samuel Wilberforce. The fault, however, was not all on one side. Whitehead has lately shown in masterly fashion how muddled was the scientific and some of the philosophical thinking of the nineteenth century; how committed it was to what Fechner calls the "Night-view" of the universe, according to which all the so-called secondary qualities, comprising all that gives life meaning, worth, and beauty, are subjective valuations imposed on a dark, blind, mechanical Reality; and how a truer philosophy has restored to Nature all that the abstract mathematical schematism of the older thinkers stripped off from it. He bids us read the First Book of Wordsworth's *Prelude* and the poems of Shelley. How true it is that our great poets have been the Englishman's wisest teachers!

III

DEMOCRACY

Delivered at Baltimore, U.S.A., in 1925

IN Europe, Democracy is the name of a form of government with which we are all familiar, and in which we acquiesce, not because we are satisfied with it, but because the few possible alternatives seem to be on the whole rather worse. Or some of us would prefer to say that it is a phase through which Western civilization has to pass. We may strongly suspect that it will not be the final form of political evolution, and we should be very sorry to think that it will. If we are asked to do homage before it, we are disposed to answer with Quinet: "Que ferai-je de ce dieu-là? O le curieux fétiche! Je l'ai vu de trop près."

But here in America, heaven knows what Democracy does not mean. We only observe that an awestruck reverential tone is expected when the word is mentioned. I read the other day in an utterance by a Boston professor: "You cannot separate God and Democracy. For if we believe in God, we believe in God's purposes, God's ideal, and that is believing in God." The logic seems to halt; but I suppose the suppressed minor premiss, that Democracy is God's ideal, was too obvious

to need stating. I also read in the *New York Medical Journal*, in an article about gout: "Uric acid is tottering on its throne. Democracy is advancing in medical theory as well as in political practice."

Well, it is very bad manners to smile at our friends while they are at their devotions. But I may be allowed to protest gently and respectfully that by derivation, and in customary usage, Democracy is neither an attribute of the Deity nor a method of therapeutics. It is just the name of an experiment in government, as Lowell once said. It is, as we all know, a Greek word meaning the rule of the *demos* or common people. It is in this sense that I propose to take the word and to discuss its value and its prospects.

We in England know quite as much about the working of Democracy in practice as you do in America, for whereas our King no longer attempts to take any independent part in politics, your President has managed to retain very much the same powers with which you invested him when you drew up your Constitution, that is to say, the powers which George III then enjoyed. You have also a valuable safeguard against mob rule in your written Constitution and in your Supreme Court. We have no safeguard at all except the traditional good sense and moderation of the British people.

Nevertheless, our jaws still ache a little with our efforts to talk American during the war, when we

were plying the American eagle with lumps of sugar to induce him to fly over the Atlantic and help us to beat the Germans. I cannot too much admire the efforts of our statesmen to represent that the one aim of the Allies (including, of course, the unhappy Nicholas II of Russia) was to make the world safe for Democracy. One of the chief results of the war is that half the world thinks that Democracy is not safe for itself.

I must try to define Democracy rather more nearly. "The rule of the people" is rather vague. I will define it as a form of polity under which all adult citizens have votes, and in which the government is directly determined or controlled by the votes of the majority. But questions arise at once. Is female suffrage essential to democracy? And what do we mean by the word "directly"?

Strictly, Democracy as a form of government means that the community as a whole, without agents or representatives, performs the functions of sovereignty. As a Frenchman says, "If the people delegates its sovereignty, it abdicates." But obviously this is possible only in very small compact States, like the old Greek cantons or towns like medieval Florence. Some of the Swiss cantons more nearly approach it than any other modern State. Aristotle thought that all the citizens ought to be able to hear the voice of a herald—and he knew nothing of the possibilities of broadcasting.

An attempt to preserve the essentials of pure

Democracy in a large State is the "delegate" theory of representation, which turns the legislator into a mere puppet. It has been tried, but it really only works as the engine of a fanatical party, which wishes to attain certain purely sectional aims by rigid discipline. It is a method of wrecking genuine popular government.

"Representation" in its proper sense is certainly a partial abdication, though it may be a voluntary surrender of power. When the French made Napoleon III emperor by an enormous popular majority, it was almost a complete abdication.

If then we were to rest content with this definition of Democracy, we might have to say with Rousseau that there has never been a true Democracy and never will be.

But an intelligent defender of Democracy might say, Your definition of Democracy does not satisfy me. We use the word in a wider sense, without falling into such absurdities as you quoted just now. Democracy is not only a form of Government. It is also a form of State and a form of Society. I think we may admit the justice of this plea, especially as Professor Hearnshaw has emphasized the importance of making this distinction. At the same time, I wish to keep as close as I can to the political results of popular government, since as a form of society we might find social equality in a community which is not politically democratic, and to include the whole subject of social

equality would make the scope of this lecture too wide.

As a form of State, Democracy implies only ultimate popular sovereignty. Democracy as a form of State is a mode of appointing and dismissing governors. But even this is too wide for my purpose. If a nation places itself under a dictator like Mussolini, even though theoretically the electors retain the right to terminate his tenure of office, we can hardly call that nation a democratic State.

As a form of Society, Democracy rests on the idea of social equality. This has no necessary connection with republican institutions. There may be—I think there is—more of social equality in Norway than in France. And yet I think that of the windy triad which the French revolutionists proclaimed—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, adding “*où la mort*” for those who did not like them—France on the whole has specialized in Equality, England in Liberty, and America in Fraternity. Although we in England abominate the type whom the Americans call “good mixers,” the kind of man who will slap a total stranger on the back and tell him all about his private affairs, I think there is something very attractive in the easy way in which Americans make friends with each other. I am not sure that Fraternity is not the best of the three, if we cannot have them all.

Of course the idea that all men are equal is, as Carlyle said, “a palpable incredibility and a

delirious absurdity." But the right to equal consideration, to equality before the law, and the absence of social castes, is, I cannot help thinking, a good and Christian thing. Perhaps Democracy gives it a better chance than any other form of government.

When your countrymen shout for two hours or more, like the Ephesians, that Democracy is "great," they mean, I suppose, something of this kind. No unapproachable autocrats, no "untouchable" pariahs, as in India, no haughty nobles, no prancing generals, and so on. But equality is not the same as Democracy. I will not discuss it further now, but will take Democracy as a form of Government and as a form of State—loosely, as the system under which the popular vote controls the policy and composition of the Government. What are the chief things to be said for and against it?

First, among the things which may be said in its favour, there is the diffusion of a sense of responsibility. Under an Asiatic despotism, there is no sense of responsibility. The government of the country is not the business of the governed. We find there an apathetic submission to tyranny, which, however, does not extend to the whole of life. If social customs and religion are not respected, the worm will turn. We in India have had to leave alone some customs which we know to be thoroughly bad, because we believe that they can only be reformed when the people themselves are con-

vinced that they are mischievous, and the process of education is slow. In the earlier days of our rule, when we were less afraid, we did suppress the Thugs, and the burning of widows.

Democracy also has a high educative value. So John Stuart Mill says: "The ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty or the supreme controlling power is vested in the entire aggregate of the community, because it promotes a higher form of national character than any other." Nietzsche is of the opposite opinion. "Democracy," he says, "is not only a degenerating form of political organization; it is also equivalent to a degenerating declining type of man." Of these two judgments, I think Mill's is nearer the mark. In England, where some form of popular government has lasted longer than anywhere else, though we are naturally a rather stupid people, we have been saved again and again by a political common sense, an instinctive knowledge of what is the important and necessary thing to be done at the time, a kind of *flair* which tells us when to stand out, when to compromise, and when to yield, which is not found to the same degree, say, in France or in Germany. A German said indignantly, "Why do you English look such fools? You deceived us completely." There is a tradition of compromise and working arrangements in a long-established Democracy. Revolutions are, I think, rare in nations of this type.

If you want a structure to be stable, it should have a broad base. This is supplied by democratic institutions. The French writer Faguet says: "A democratic element is required, because it is dangerous that the people should be an enigma. It is necessary to know what it thinks, feels, suffers, desires, fears, and hopes, and these things can be learnt only from the people itself."

When we compare the social life of our country to-day with what it was a century and a half ago, when England was practically an oligarchy, we find great changes, and chiefly for the better. The character of the gentleman is the finest ideal that our nation has offered to the world; it is universally recognized as our main contribution to social ethics. But class-distinctions corrupted this ideal sadly. Not only were the aristocrats insufferably haughty to those whom they considered their inferiors, so that Lord Chesterfield criticized Samuel Johnson for not making any difference in his manner, treating his superiors, equals, and inferiors alike, but we find that more serious blots on the character of a gentleman were judged very lightly in the days before Democracy. Differences were made between debts of honour and debts to tradesmen; the latter were repudiated without shame. I am afraid this evil is even now not extinct; I am told that many fashionable ladies deliberately cheat their dressmakers, and count on their not daring to expose the fraud or seek a

remedy at law. In their treatment of the other sex, the oligarchs fell even lower; they did not recognize that as there is no respect of persons with God, so the personal honour and self-respect of every human being is sacred, without any distinction of class.

I am old enough to remember a time when class-differences were much more sharply defined than they are now. The *grand seigneur* and his wife fifty years ago sometimes permitted themselves to treat their "inferiors" in a way which would not now be tolerated. Democracy has also broken down the curious line of demarcation, peculiar, I think, to our country, between those who were entitled to call themselves gentlemen and those who were not. The peculiarity of England was that this line ran right through the centre of the middle class. Only a few of the professions were supposed to be thoroughly gentlemanly. A public-school education, and the right to armorial bearings, were also almost essential to place a family above the line. This line was, of course, not recognized by all classes of the population; it was most valued by those who were just above it. It has now almost disappeared; and I think nobody need regret it. No one could now seriously maintain that good manners have anything to do with heraldry.

I have one more decided merit to mention. When we speak of the inefficiency of Democracy, we sometimes forget how inefficient was the oligarchy which preceded it. Our Civil Service—the

Government offices—is now manned by men of first-class brains and commendable industry. It was not so a hundred years ago. Even the army relapsed into extreme inefficiency as soon as a war was over. Wellington once confessed that there were not enough troops in England to bury a Field Marshal!

There are further some alleged merits of which I do not feel sure. Is Democracy favourable to Liberty? I do not think we can say either Yes or No. I have jotted down two utterances by our Labour leaders which do not at all breathe the spirit of freedom. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said: "A co-operative commonwealth must have a common will which it enforces to some extent or other on the individuals in the commonwealth." (If the common will is not the will of the individuals who are to be coerced, whose will is it?) To much the same effect Mr. Snowden: "When all submit to the law imposed by the common will for the common good, the law is not slavery but true liberty." (The "common will" is a figment, a mystical entity corresponding to nothing in reality. It is a stick for the backs of minorities, who are first deprived of any effective representation, and are then invited to admire the "justice" and "true liberty" under which they are flayed alive.) But I do not think it is fair to charge Democracy with this disingenuous nonsense. It is part of the stock in

trade of Socialism, which is a very different thing.

I would rather call attention to the weakness of a democratic Government in face of such revolutionary movements as a General Strike. My own opinion is that Democracy is only possible and effective in a nation where there is a strong underlying consciousness of unity. It is almost impotent against anti-social conspiracies. Any uncompromising sectionalism in a country is a great danger to popular government.

A second merit which is often ascribed to Democracy on very doubtful grounds is love of peace and aversion to war. I am very doubtful if this is true. Lord Salisbury once wrote: "Moderation, especially in matters of territory, has never been a characteristic of Democracy. Wherever it has had free play, in the ancient world or the modern, a thirst for empire, a readiness for aggressive war, has always marked it." Mirabeau in 1790 thought the same: "Free peoples are more eager for war, and democracies more the slaves of their passions, than the most absolute autocracies." Tocqueville says: "It is hard for a Democracy to begin or to end a war." I quite admit that if the people were really consulted, they would hardly ever vote for war; but they never are consulted, whether the head of the State is called emperor, king, or president. And you, my American friends, have done pretty well for yourselves in the way of

annexations, the result of a series of wars which were not exactly forced upon you! I am afraid it is my deliberate opinion that all that was said in the Great War about the impossibility of making peace with an emperor was good business but arrant humbug. I cannot see, from my reading of history, that there is a pin to choose between the morality of empires and that of republics. They are both tarred with the same brush. As Graham Wallas says: "When a Tsar or a bureaucracy finds itself forced to govern in opposition to a vague national feeling which may at any moment create an overwhelming national purpose, the autocrat becomes the most unscrupulous of demagogues, and stirs up racial or religious or social hatred, or the lust for foreign war, with no more scruple than a newspaper proprietor under a Democracy." That is to say, an emperor, when he is in a tight place, *may* be as bellicose and unscrupulous as those who sway popular opinion under a Democracy! When we look behind forms to realities, and find, as we may do, an emperor who is a puppet and a president who is an autocrat, we shall not be supposed to care much, as pacifists, for the name of the governments which the nations enjoy or suffer.

Let us now consider the defects of Democracy.

Inefficiency and wastefulness are almost inseparable from this type of government. Contrast the economy of men and money with which

Napoleon made war with the insane extravagance of our Government in the Great War, the disastrous consequences of which we are now beginning to realize.

This wastefulness in war-time is only part of the systematic plunder of the minority which must be expected as soon as the majority realize their power. Every General Election becomes an auction of the worldly goods of the taxpayer. When one class levies the taxes and another class pays them, the pillage will continue as long as the loot lasts. As Lecky says: "The forms of corruption under a pure Democracy are far more detrimental to the prosperity of nations than those which existed in other days." The masses, when they become conscious of power, set to work to transfer the wealth to themselves. This has gone much farther in England than in the United States, which in many ways is the most conservative of all great nations. In England one-tenth of the population pays more than five-sixths of the taxes. An immense and ever-growing parasitic class is being created, which drains the wealth of the country and becomes itself more deeply demoralized every year.

A third objection to Democracy is the low type of politicians which it produces. As the Canadian, Louis Simond, who travelled in England during the Napoleonic War, says: "Few take the trouble of persuading the people, but those who see their interest in deceiving them." Anatole Beaulieu,

writing in 1887, deplores the deterioration in the character of this class in France. "The wider the circle from which politicians and State functionaries are recruited, the lower their intellectual level seems to have sunk. This deterioration in the personnel of government has been yet more striking from the moral point of view. Politics have tended to become more corrupt, more debased, and to soil the hands of those who take part in them and get their living from them. Political battles have become too bitter and too vulgar not to inspire aversion in the noblest and most upright natures, by their violence and their intrigues. The élite of the nation in more than one country is showing a tendency to have nothing to do with them. Politics is an industry in which a man, in order to prosper, requires less intelligence and knowledge than boldness and capacity for intrigue. It has already become in some States one of the most ignominious of careers." Of course we might find testimony on the other side. Lord Bryce, who made an exhaustive study of democratic institutions in many parts of the world, took a far more favourable view of popular government. His well-weighed judgments may fairly be set against the probably exaggerated indictments which I have quoted. But it can hardly be disputed that the qualities which enable a man to come to the front in democratic politics are not those which would be likely to make a man a wise ruler in difficult times.

Moreover, the democratic statesman, while he is in office, has very little time to read or think. The most momentous decisions, which may result in the complete ruin of a country, are necessarily taken hurriedly, and sometimes by men who have never studied history, the most valuable guide in great national crises.

Are democratic governments more corrupt than others? Lord Bryce rather minimizes the charges of direct corruption, which in any case have been rarely brought home to English democratic statesmen. But the most disastrous form of corruption is not peculation, but class-bribery through legislation, and in this kind of corruption democratic governments have a bad pre-eminence. The oligarchs in the eighteenth century were corrupt—there were always aristocratic placemen squabbling for rich sinecures; but this affected a few persons only, and did comparatively little harm to the country. When the middle class came into power, public life was much purer than it had been, or than it was to be again. Lecky, who knew the period well, and from inside, recorded his opinion that the country was best governed between the first and second Reform Bills, between 1832 and 1867. The moral seems to be that the only way to secure a tolerably clean government is to entrust the levying of revenue to those who will have to pay the taxes. There is then a direct interest in economy and honesty which is

wholly wanting under such a system as we have at present.

A democratic country is governed by catchwords. The electors look for information to public speeches and newspaper articles. The art of a demagogue is that of a parrot. He must use some senseless catchword again and again, working, like a skilled advertiser, on the suggestibility of the crowd. Most people like a word which has no definite meaning, but which, when frequently repeated, awakes an emotion. The use of colours shows how very primitive the emotional appeal is. Rabin-dranath Tagore, after visiting America, shows how these methods strike a cultivated Oriental. I am far from hinting that he would not have found much the same on our side of the Atlantic. "Democracy," he says, "makes a deliberate study of the laws of the dark patches in the human intellect, wherewith to help itself to create an atmosphere of delusion through hints, gestures, yells, and startling grimaces, for the purpose of stupefying the popular mind. Once when I was in Chicago I saw everywhere on the town walls one single name blazoned in big letters in an endless round of repetition, like the whirlwind monotony of a dervish dance that dazes one's mind into vacuity. Evidently the name belonged to some candidate for political election. But what an insult to the people, who are supposed to represent the supreme power in their government,

openly to apply to them the spell of hypnotism, as the medicine man does in the heart of Africa!" Yes, this comparison is not too severe. This method of choosing governors is worthy only of savages.

Another charge against Democracy is that of vexatious and inquisitive tyranny. The herd suspects and hates any peculiarity of conduct. There are no standards, but everything and everybody are standardized. There was more liberty of action in Russia before the revolution than in some narrow and inquisitive provincial town, where everyone is his brother's keeper. I will not dwell longer on this point, because I think you suffer more from it than we do, and do doubt you are well aware how tiresome the public opinion of "Main Street" may sometimes be.

The weakness of the executive I have mentioned already. We have had lamentable examples of it in England, notably in the powerlessness of the law to check and punish the criminal outrages of a gang of political agitators before the Great War.

Some have rather surprisingly accused democracies of ignorant opposition to change. Universal suffrage, we have been told, would have prohibited the spinning-jenny and power-loom, the threshing-machine and the reformation of the calendar; it would have restored the Stuarts and banished the teaching of science from the schools. Legislation founded on scientific opinion has no chance under Democracy. But is this true of America?

It seems to me that the American democracy is much more enlightened in this way than our own. Experiments in eugenics, which would never be seriously discussed in England, have been tried in America. On the whole, I have hopes that Democracy will not always be obscurantist, in spite of certain local eccentricities of which you will not wish to be reminded.

I have tried to hold the balance even, and I have not given my vote against Democracy. But there are signs that it is nearly played out. Parliamentary government on a very wide suffrage is an Anglo-Saxon invention. It has not been proved that it suits any other race, and we are getting sceptical about it ourselves. I cannot forget the dictum, the author of which I have forgotten, but I think it was Sybel: "Universal suffrage has always heralded the end of popular government."

At any rate, the revolt against Democracy in Europe has now become vocal. Even Lloyd George has said: "Democracy is in peril. The spreading reaction against Democracy is a serious movement which needs watching in all countries." Lenin says: "Democracy is a bourgeois conception which the revolutionary proletariat must overthrow." Ludovici asks: "Who believes in Democracy nowadays? Who believes in parliamentary government, in the brotherhood of man, or in universal suffrage?" Ramsay Muir says: "Democracy is a form of government which can justify itself only by sorting out

DEMOCRACY

the best brains of the nation and setting them to the work for which they are fittest." Frederic Harrison, a disillusioned radical, says: "No army could exist which elected its own officers; no ship of which the captain was chosen by his crew." The idea that Socialism is only advanced Democracy now finds few defenders. Le Bon says: "There is an evident and irreducible opposition between Democracy and Socialism." Pouget: "Syndicalism and Democracy are the two opposite poles which exclude each other." Sorel: "If revolutionary Syndicalism triumphs, the parliamentary régime so dear to the intellectuals will be done with." And again: "Democracy is the paradise of which unscrupulous financiers dream."

These voices are thoroughly representative. I have not quoted the anarchists, who are against all government, nor the Conservatives, who have no cause to love the régime under which we live. Democracy is being fiercely challenged, not by the reactionaries, but by all the new revolutionary forces.

I have said that in my opinion Democracy is a fair-weather creed, impotent against violent movements. Sir Henry Maine, writing in 1885, said: "If any Government should be tempted, even for a moment, to allow a portion of the multitude to set at defiance some law which it happens to dislike, it would be guilty of a crime which hardly any other virtue could redeem." A crime certainly, if

the Government could help it. But this is what an English writer said in 1918: "The Munitions of War Act has been reduced to a dead letter by incessant and unpunishable strikes. The law has been brought into universal contempt. The Government has ceased to govern in the world of labour, and has been compelled instead of governing to bribe, to cajole, to beg, to grovel. It has purchased brief truces at the cost of increasing levies of Danegeld drawn from the diminishing resources of the patient community. It has embarked on a course of payment of blackmail which must end either in bankruptcy or in revolution. Thanks to the feebleness of successive ministers, belonging to all parties, even the Germanic peril begins to pale in comparison with the red spectre of the class war." This state of things culminated, several years later, in the scandalous General Strike, which was brought to an end not by the Government, which did not dare to punish the ringleaders, but by the public spirit of the upper and middle classes, who almost proved that at a pinch they could run the country without the help of the wage-earners—a momentous discovery, this, of which we are destined to hear more. In the future we shall probably have a much smaller population, all living in comfort; and the trade unions will contain only a small minority of the nation. Machinery will reduce to insignificance the importance of manual labour.

Let me consider in the concluding portion of my lecture (1) the revolutionary anti-democratic programmes; (2) alternative forms of government, their strength and weakness; (3) the true conditions of national stability and progress.

The first thing that strikes us about revolutionary schemes is that though they are all anti-democratic, they are violently opposed to each other.

The word Socialism is as vague as Mysticism. Properly it means ownership by the State of the means of production, and a strong bureaucratic Government. In England it is associated with the Fabian Society (about 1884), founded mainly by warm-hearted, frock-coated, middle-class social reformers, and supported by clergymen, society ladies, and other respectable persons. They clung to certain Marxian fallacies, while mildly deprecating the class war. They wished to organize and docket everybody, and gradually (hence the name Fabian, after the Roman general, Fabius Maximus Cunctator—General Wait-and-See) transfer to the public treasury all interest and rent. They did, and still do, immense mischief by constantly reiterating that our civilization is a monstrous iniquity. "Things cannot go on as they are." This indiscriminate denunciation of the existing social order, which with all its faults has enabled a far larger number of human beings to live together in tolerable comfort than has been possible at any previous time, is both wicked and foolish. But from the standpoint

of political philosophy, what are the strong and weak points of State Capitalism—for we had better give it its right name?

The strongest point is, great stability, the government being omnipotent. The life and honour and bread-and-butter of every man and woman in the country would be absolutely at the disposal of the bureaucracy. The abolition of competition might lead to cheaper management. Such a nation would have great strength for war, since the whole resources of the community could be mobilized at once. The State could and would stamp out strikes and penalize idleness. The weak points are those which belong to bureaucracy. Universal red tape would paralyse private initiative. The arrogance of jacks-in-office might rise to insolent tyranny. One of the chief motives for industry would be withdrawn, and something corresponding to the slave-driver's whip might be necessary. Experience has also partially confirmed the saying of Bernard Bosanquet: "Public ownership is absentee ownership at its worst." Examples of the abandonment of public ownership for this reason are quoted from Belgium, Queensland, and other countries.

State Capitalism is quite different from Communism. It does not imply equality of incomes, and in practice would probably mean universal piece-work and payment by results.

It was the menace of Fabianism which impelled Herbert Spencer, an old-fashioned Victorian Liberal

individualist, to write his book, *The Man Versus the State*. His analysis of a Socialist society is very acute. He calls it "The New Toryism," and says: "Socialism means slavery, and the slavery will not be mild." But he need not have been afraid that a revolution in Great Britain or North America would take this form. No democratic Government would be nearly strong enough to set up a system which would make life almost intolerable for the majority. Anglo-Saxons "never will be slaves." There is at present only one country in the world where State Capitalism could be tried on a universal scale. That country is Russia. No prudent man will prophesy what the end of the Russian revolution will be. That vast country may split up; or some Napoleon may win over the Red Army, overthrow the Soviet Government, and embark on a war of conquest. But one quite possible issue is the abandonment of Communism and the establishment of State Capitalism on the lines which I have just indicated. The Russian Empire so organized under an omnipotent bureaucracy would be a terrible danger for the rest of the world.

The essence of State Capitalism is that the State is everything. The principle of Syndicalism is that the State is nothing. It is anti-national and cosmopolitan; the class war is to wipe out all frontiers. It has arisen as a reaction against Fabian State-worship, and as a result of the contempt into which politics generally have fallen by their ineptitude or

corruption. Abuse of politicians is part of the stock in trade of Syndicalism.

Syndicalism is of course a development of trade-unionism. Its chief weapon is the General Strike, supported by sabotage, ca' canny, and the boycott. A syndicalist revolution, timed to coincide with a Sinn Fein rebellion, was being prepared in England for the autumn of 1914. The War stopped it. In Italy it has called into existence the Fascist dictatorship, which has proved that in most countries the forces of order can stop revolution—if they act in time.

It is only fair to add that a non-revolutionary form of Syndicalism, under the name of Guild Socialism, finds favour with a few serious thinkers.

Bolshevism belongs to the history of revolutions. It has been said that the revolutionary fever goes through four stages—idealism, terrorism, famine, military despotism. The history of the Russian revolution may be very briefly sketched. The Tsarist Government fell in March 1917, owing to the strain of war upon a thoroughly rotten structure. The poor Tsar was a feeble creature; his wife was ambitious and seemingly half insane, dominated by a monk of infamous character. The nation was corrupt from top to bottom. "In Russia," said a German, "you can buy anyone, up to a Grand Duke; of course a Grand Duke costs money." As the result, the unhappy moujiks were sent to the shambles, sometimes with one rifle to three

men, and no shells. Fourteen million men were mobilized, many of whom remained idle at the depots. It was an act of insensate folly for a State which was so deeply corrupt to engage in war. But it is not true that the condition of the poor had been getting worse, and was now intolerable. Revolutions almost always occur on a rising market. They are the result not of desperation but of aspiration. The first revolution, under Kerensky, was almost bloodless and seemed promising; but just as the Girondists were ousted by Robespierre and his gang of terrorists, so the Constitutional Democrats fell before the "Majority Men," the Bolsheviki. This was a revolt against Democracy. As Lenin said in 1920 (he was often embarrassingly frank): "We have never spoken of liberty. We shall exercise the dictatorship until the majority submit." Trotsky was, if possible, more brutal. "Democracy is a worthless and wretched masquerade. We repudiate it in the name of the proletariat. Three times hopeless is the idea of coming to power through Democracy." Lenin estimated that his party consisted of 500,000 persons out of 130 million, and that of the 500,000, 60 per cent. were fools, 39 per cent. criminals, and 1 per cent. convinced Communists! This remarkable syndicate of despots publishes its butcher's bill from time to time. A list in the *Gaulois*, which professes to come from Soviet sources, amounts to 1,800,000 killed in cold blood, classified according to status. Rather

more than half are peasants. As Anatole France says, if you start with the supposition that men are naturally good and virtuous, you invariably end by wanting to kill all who do not agree with you.

The conditions in Russia were uniquely favourable for social revolution. The people were accustomed to tyranny, and the machinery of oppression, including armies of spies and secret police, was ready to hand. Resistance was difficult owing to the vast spaces and poverty of communications. The land was self-supporting. Industry was undeveloped and feeble, and the middle class very weak. Russia also contained a vast amount of easily realisable wealth in gold and jewels.

Are there any conditions under which Communism, as distinguished from State Capitalism, can succeed? History says yes—celibacy and a religious basis. The monasteries are the one example of successful Communism. Allow the family, and private ownership soon comes back. Goldwin Smith gives an amusing account of a communistic experiment in America in the last century. The "Rappites, who expected the speedy coming of the millennium, called their first two settlements Harmony, their third Economy. They are not only wealthy, but millionaires of the first order. We are not surprised to learn that they do not proselytize, though converts might be found for a creed more extravagant than Rappism, if it were endowed with twenty millions. All the members are advanced in years (1893).

The end of Rapp's millennium is in fact a tontine, which will terminate in a Communist Astor."

Putting aside Anarchism as not worth discussing, we find two main divisions of anti-democratic revolutionism—State Socialism and Syndicalism. State Socialism seems the stronger of the two, but it has yet to be proved that any nation could bear to live under it.

Another possible government is Theocracy. Hebrew Theocracy begins with the centralizing policy of the later kings, who hoped to make the Temple an annex of the royal palace. When the Jews lost their independence, the theocratic idea realized itself in the Jewish Church, which at last became a homeless State. In a sense, this has been one of the great successes of history. The Jews have stood by the graves of all their oppressors in turn, and are still, we might almost say, a world-power. Equally remarkable is the stability of Hinduism.

This is mainly an Asiatic type. It shows great tenacity of life, but growth is strangled, and the priests must govern by fraud and superstition, since they have no other weapons.

The little Greek States are permanently interesting. They were wonderful forcing-houses of genius, but terribly wasteful of their fine human material, and unable to combine against a foreign invader, except in the Persian wars.

There have been two supremely successful

creations of political genius since the Roman Empire, both of them the work of Anglo-Saxons—the American Constitution and the British Commonwealth of Nations. You will find nothing like either of them in history.

The essence of despotism is that power comes from *above*. Every official is responsible to some one above him. The Government is a kind of pyramid, the apex of which is the sovereign. It is quite different from aristocracy; under such governments the officials are usually chosen for merit from the middle class. It was so in Russia. With a first-rate man at the top, this system works extremely well. The weak point of it is that the ruler cannot be chosen; he must be where he is by birth, that is, by chance. It is most unlikely that he will be a man of great capacity; and if he fails at a crisis, there is no remedy except assassination or revolution. The modern, post-war type of arbitrary government is the dictatorship, a rather new expedient under which half of Europe is governed at this day. It may be regarded as a temporary expedient; but at present it shows signs of strength and permanence. A serious drawback is that the dictator may lose his bodily and mental powers without seeing the necessity of abdicating.

My own preference is for the mixed type, such as the constitution of Great Britain in the nineteenth century. It was a period of relatively pure politics and of great prosperity. It was also a

time of peace. I would rather have lived from about 1810 to 1885 than at any other time. Bernard Shaw has said that the great desideratum is to find some good method of weighing opinions, and that it has not yet been found. Power is always abused, and I suppose always will be. The power of the purse certainly ought not to be given to a class which is likely to pillage another class for its own exclusive benefit. Plato's famous suggestion of a class of "Guardians" who are not allowed to own property is worth considering. But direct bribery is not the worst danger.

As Herbert Spencer said, there is no political alchemy for getting golden conduct out of leaden instincts. Corrupt, self-seeking citizens will spoil any form of government, and on the other hand, a people which for a time is imbued with a noble spirit of disinterested activity will make even a poor system work well. Bishop Creighton once said: "Socialism will be possible only when we are all perfect; and then it will not be necessary."

We benefit our fellow-men most by increasing the available stock of spiritual values. "We live by admiration, hope, and love," by homage to whatsoever things are true, pure, noble, and of good report; by encouraging all those interests which are increased, not diminished, by sharing them. We injure our fellows most by planting among them hatred, envy, covetousness, and greed, and all that makes men "hateful and hating one another." In

MORE LAY THOUGHTS

short, whatever form we give to our visible State, it must be, as Plato told us, only a copy of that Spiritual City of which the type is laid up in heaven. It is in that city that we have our "conversation," as St. Paul says, our citizenship; and it is a realm of values, not of commodities. "The Kingdom of God is within us." "It is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

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